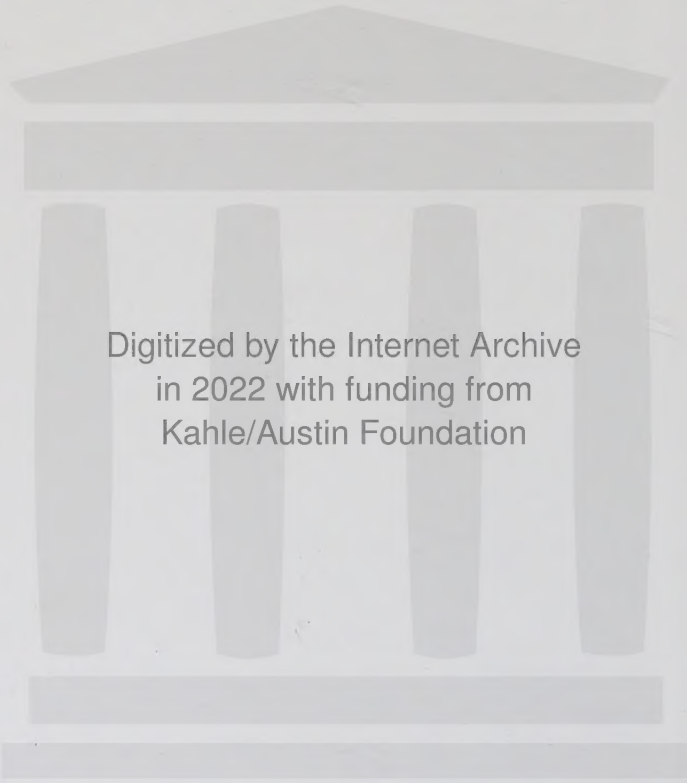


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THE CZECH RED UNIONS, 1918-1929

A STUDY OF THEIR RELATIONS
WITH THE COMMUNIST PARTY
AND THE MOSCOW INTERNATIONALS

KEVIN MCDERMOTT

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Dedicated to my mother
(1923-1983)

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ABBREVIATIONS

ČOD	Československá obec dělnická (Czechoslovak Workers' Society).
Comintern	Communist International.
ECCI	Executive Committee of the Communist International.
IFTU	International Federation of Trade Unions.
KSČ	Komunistická strana Československa (Communist Party of Czechoslovakia).
MVS	Mezinárodní všeodborový svaz (International All-Trade Union Organisations).
OSČ	Odborové sdružení československé (Czechoslovak Trade Union Association).
RILU or Profintern	Red International of Labour Unions.
SDP	Czechoslovak Social Democratic Workers' Party.

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PREFACE

It has been widely accepted in the West that during the 1920s Stalin and the Soviet leadership of the Moscow Internationals, the Comintern and Profintern, increasingly controlled all aspects of the world communist movement. This "Bolshevisation" process began in earnest in 1925 and culminated in the disasters of the "Third Period," 1928-1933. Centralisation, monolithicism and uniformity were imposed on foreign Communist Parties, and all vestiges of independent thought and action were eliminated. Although much of this analysis remains essentially valid, particularly for the years after 1929, new research shows that in reality the picture was far more complicated. The present volume attempts to prove this by focusing on relations between the Czech Red Unions, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Moscow Internationals. It is argued that the Red trade unions were not merely subordinate organs of the party and Moscow, but on the contrary were able to preserve a degree of independence and national specificity in the face of growing pressure from the "Bolshevisers."

The first three chapters place the developments of the 1920s in historical perspective, concentrating on the Social Democratic trade union movement in the period 1897-1922. Chapter one elucidates the events and causes of the nationalist split in the All-Austrian union before 1914. This split resulted in the creation and consolidation of the Czechoslovak Trade Union Association (*Odborové sdružení československé* - OSČ). Chapters two and three examine in some detail the schism in the OSČ after World War I and the formation in October 1922 of the communist

trade union centre, the International All-Trade Union Organisation (*Mezinárodní všeodborový svaz* - MVS). The role and influence of the Communist Party and of the Comintern and Profintern are discussed and form an integral part of subsequent chapters on developments within the Red Unions.

The second half of the book is devoted to an examination of these developments in the years 1922-1929. Many problems became evident in the internal life of the Red Unions from their very foundation. The major problem was the highly centralised organisational structure of the MVS, which gave rise to a protracted and bitter dispute between the union leadership and the so-called independent Red Unions. The nature and significance of this dispute forms the basis of chapter four. Equally relevant was the relationship between MVS and OSČ organisations. The main concern here is with the implementation of the united front tactic as decreed by the Comintern and Profintern in late 1921. It is argued in chapter five that neither the united front "from above" nor "from below" was successfully carried out by MVS member sections.

The core of the work concentrates on the often stormy relationship between the MVS and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (*Komunistická strana Československa* - KSČ). The controversial question of the extent to which the party could legitimately influence and "interfere" in trade union affairs lay at the heart of the matter. As the 1920s wore on it became increasingly clear that the KSČ was overstepping the bounds of legitimate interference. The MVS, under Josef Hais, struggled, often with success, to pursue independent or semi-independent policies on a wide range of issues, although on occasion the union succumbed to pressure exerted by the party's trade union department.

Up to 1928 the climate in the international communist movement allowed for certain deviations, but the situation changed dramatically in that year following the advent of the "class against class" theory. The Comintern and Profintern ordered a "turn to the left." This new hardline approach sounded the deathknell for those "right-wing opportunist" party and union leaders who refused to adapt to the revolutionary demands of the day. In Czechoslovakia, the ultra-leftists around Gottwald, Slánský, Šverma and Guttman challenged the Jílek party leadership with the support of Moscow. The result was the historic split in the KSČ at the fifth party congress in February 1929 and a similar schism in the

MVS a month later. The author maintains that the root cause of the schism was a profound ideological struggle between those who were prepared to subordinate themselves to Moscow and those who wished to retain a degree of national specificity. Such attachment to what can be termed "national communism" is highly significant in that it tends to cast doubt upon the idea of the monolithic nature of the international communist movement and demonstrates that Moscow did not command total and unreserved respect from member parties until at least 1929. This argument is supported not only by detailed reference to Czechoslovakia, but also by the brief survey of conditions in Germany, France and Britain, which serves as the concluding chapter of the book.

Having outlined the basic aims of the work, a few words are needed on its shortcomings and limitations. It does not intend to be a comprehensive, definitive account of the Czechoslovak trade union movement in the 1920s. I have concentrated almost entirely on the Czech Social Democratic and communist trade unions to the detriment of developments in non-socialist organisations, Slovakia and the German-speaking areas of Bohemia and Moravia. Another book would be required to do justice to these important subjects. Furthermore, my main concerns are political, ideological and tactical conflicts, not the more mundane matters of the day-to-day management and activity of trade unions in the factories. Hence, the work is very much biased toward the viewpoint of union leaderships, not union memberships. This method of study, though a trifle unfashionable, was forced upon me owing to the lack of "received knowledge" and to the fact that the vast majority of archival, primary and secondary sources consists of leadership reports and statements and congress protocols, proceedings and resolutions.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ORIGINS AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE OSČ

The Social Democratic Czechoslav Trade Union Association (*Od-
borové sdružení československé—OSČ*¹) was founded in January 1897. Its formation and early development were shaped to a large extent by the highly complicated inter-relationship between the nationalist and socialist trends in the Czech and Austrian labour movements in the period 1878-1918. The key issues of nationalism or internationalism, autonomism or centralism arose as a consequence of the multi-national character of the Habsburg Monarchy and were to pose insoluble dilemmas for Czech and Austrian socialists until the creation of the Czechoslovak First Republic in October 1918. These fundamental issues not only played a pivotal role in the split in the All-Austrian trade union movement, but also helped to determine the essential characteristics of the OSČ in the first two decades of its existence.

The Formation of the OSČ

Ever since the 1830s the Czech lands (Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia) had undergone intense industrialization beginning in 1831 with the construction of the first coke-heated furnace at Vítkovice. Iron and machine production developed in several areas (Prague, Brno, Plzeň, Kladno and Třinec), as did the mining of black and brown coal (Kladno, Moravská

Ostrava, Plzeň, Rosice, Žacléř and the Most-Chomutov-Teplice region) and the textile industry (Prague, Brno, Liberec and east Bohemia). Although this rapid development was temporarily delayed in the 1870s owing to the economic crisis of 1873, the average yearly growth of industrial production in Austria and Bohemia was 4.1 per cent between 1865-1885. The 1890s and 1900s were years of "true prosperity" and substantial growth. During this period an increasing volume of Austrian industry was shifted to Bohemia, largely because of the availability of coal and coke, lower production costs and the favourable geographical position of Bohemia for foreign trade. By the outbreak of the First World War, Bohemia accounted for 56 per cent of the Empire's total industrial production, including 57 per cent of iron production, 60 per cent of the textile industry and as much as 90 per cent of sugar output.² It is against this backdrop of rapid industrialization with all its social consequences that the Czech labour movement originated.

The Czech national revival of the nineteenth century and its corollary, the democratic movement of 1848 onwards, were, under the impact of capitalist industrialization, intimately linked to the growing social movement in the second half of the century. Both the national democratic and socialist movements were products of what Jacques Rupnik has termed the "dialectic between the city and the countryside."³ The transfer of the Czech-speaking rural population, where native Czech sentiment was strongest, to the towns not only formed the basis of the nascent working class, but also tended to de-Germanise nationally mixed cities.⁴ Since the Czech bourgeoisie was relatively weak and large-scale industry effectively in the hands of German capital, social and national repression were often fused in the eyes of Czech workers. Any socio-economic struggle in the factory necessarily had nationalist dimensions.⁵ This above all accounts for the influence of national ideology on the Czech socialist movement towards the end of the nineteenth century.

As we have seen Czech socialism is an offspring of the national democratic revival beginning in 1848. It is also a product primarily of German socialism, which permeated the Austrian workers' movement. Socialist ideas provided a "strong stimulus" for the growth of Czech trade unions, being brought into Bohemia and Moravia by Czech workers in Vienna and other large German-Austrian cities.⁶ The teachings of Lassalle, Marx and Engels had spread to the Czech lands by the 1860s and 1870s,⁷ and

the Czech labour movement reflected this diverse background in terms of a split between the nationalists led by Josef Barák and the internationalists under Josef Bohuslav Pecka and Ladislav Zápotocký. The latter two participated in the foundation of the Austrian Social Democratic Party at the Neudörfel congress of 1874. However, the nationalist question could not be suppressed entirely and at the Břevnov congress of April 1878, the Czechs constituted their own independent Social Democratic Party (SDP), albeit within the federal Austrian party. From this time on the dichotomy between nationalist decentralisation and internationalist centralisation played an increasingly important role as the impact of Marxist ideas took root in the Czech lands in the 1880s and 1890s.

As in Germany, the Czech and Austrian Social Democratic Parties, although Marxist in name, were more concerned with reforming the existing structure of society than with overturning it. This is perhaps less applicable to the Czechs who were inclined towards more radical anti-Austrian policies, but who were also wary of prevailing Marxist concepts which became identified with tacit support for the Austrian state and Viennese centralism. Czech socialism thus became a flexible, pragmatic mixture of Marxist, nationalist and humanist democratic trends, the main aim of which was the emancipation of the exploited Czech worker from German capital by a campaign for social reforms and universal suffrage.⁸ It is within this complicated political context that the Czech trade union movement had its origins in the 1860s and 1870s.

The first labour organisations were formed in 1862-1863 by skilled Prague printers and machinists, the latter having 1320 members by 1867. The first workers' journal *Dělník* (The Worker), began publication on 1 December 1867 and in March 1868 the first worker self-help association *Oul* (The Hive) was founded by F. Chleborád, a liberal economist and lawyer. *Oul* was based in Prague, but following its model other self-help and cooperative groups founded in all the major industrial areas of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, and by 1870 there were over 300 such associations. These and subsequent developments were facilitated by the promulgation of an Imperial law permitting limited freedom of assembly and association (1867) and by the Coalition Law (1870). These remained in force until the First World War. Nevertheless, police surveillance was a permanent factor in the labour movement throughout the period 1870-1918. Indeed the 1880s were characterised by the anti-socialist laws which, although

less extensive in Austria than in Germany, seriously curtailed effective development of both the Czech and Austrian Social Democratic parties and the trade union movement.⁹ It was only with the reappearance of social democracy in the late 1880s and early 1890s that Czech workers once again began to organise themselves, this time under the direct influence of the SDP and its socialist programme.

The All-Austrian Social Democratic Party as reconstituted at the Hainfeld congress of December 1888-January 1889 was originally in organisation including both German-Austrian and Czech workers. By the end of 1893 the latter had formed an autonomous Czech SDP, as they had in 1878. The Hainfeld programme called *inter alia* for the growth of union organisations, an appeal reiterated at the second congress in Vienna in June 1891, which recommended workers to affiliate to existing unions and form new ones "...since trade union organisations breed conscious workers and improve their material position."¹⁰ At this congress, Viktor Adler, the leader of the Austrian Social Democrats, stated that trade unions were non-political, but membership in them politicised workers and gave them a sense of "equal civic rights." The SDP-sponsored campaign for trade union development bore fruit in the 1890s. At the time of the Hainfeld congress there were 104 union and educational groups with 15,498 members, but these figures had risen to 219 groups with 49,000 members by 1891, a "considerable number" being in Bohemia.¹¹

The successful thrust of the SDP leaders for union organisation resulted in the formation of a permanent All-Austrian union centre in December 1893—the Viennese Imperial Trade Union Commission (hereafter the Vienna Commission).¹² Its principal task was to concentrate, organise and administer union groups throughout the Austrian part of the Empire, but by 1897 the Commission was decentralised by the decision of Czech unionists to form the OSČ. The 1890s were years of growing Czech nationalism in all spheres of public life, and indeed concessions were granted to Prague by the Austrian government.¹³ It would thus be easy to attribute the rift solely to nationalist antagonisms, but a closer look at the dispute demonstrates that organisational and financial considerations also played their part in determining the Czechs' actions.

Soon after the establishment of the Vienna Commission there arose complaints that Czech groups were being "neglected." Czech unions grew

rapidly between 1895-97 and Vienna was accused of simply being unable to satisfy their demands and needs, especially in cultural and agitational issues.¹⁴ Administrative functions were carried out in German even in Czech-speaking groups, naturally giving rise to resentment. Another stumbling block was the thorny issue of union dues. As *Právo lidu* (People's Right), the SDP daily, asserted, the Czech trade union movement was too powerful to be treated by Vienna as a "mere bagatelle" (*bagatelisováno*). It had a right to be concerned and consulted about the use to which the dues it paid to the Commission were being put and to expect benefits and progress for Czech workers.¹⁵ Vienna was also accused of favouring German districts in Bohemia when distributing strike funds.¹⁶ In this way the Commission was hindering the free development of Czech trade union organisations. The essential interests of the Czech movement were involved, not merely the "nationality question."¹⁷

The SDP had been a powerful adherent of Czech trade union independence,¹⁸ and Party leaders felt that the federal political party should be paralleled by an autonomous Czech trade union centre. Indeed the party could not function properly whilst a majority of its members were in unions controlled by Vienna.¹⁹ The second SDP congress in Brno in May 1896 discussed the possibility of founding an independent Czech trade union body, but decided that the moment was not yet ripe for such a step.²⁰ The party was thus described as the "principal supporter" of the Czech trade union movement by Josef Roušar, future general secretary of the OSČ.²¹ The close relationship between the SDP and OSČ was a very significant feature, not only in the dispute with Vienna, but also in later developments.

Relations between the Czechs and Austrians had deteriorated to such an extent that a showdown was staged at the second congress of the Trade Union Commission held in Vienna in December 1896. The Czech representatives put forward the following demands, *inter alia*: the Commission should elect two secretaries, one of whom was to speak and write Czech fluently; the Czech secretary should have the special task of compiling statistics for the needs of Czech unionists; and Czech, Polish, Slovene and Italian speakers should be employed not only in the central administration, but also in the provincial and district administrations.²²

These proposals were rejected by the German-speaking delegates, who were determined to preserve the unity of the Austrian trade union

movement and who therefore accused the Czechs of separatism.²³ The Czechs retaliated by forming the OSČ. The initiative for this came from Prague metalworkers followed by other Prague workers, namely tailors, shoemakers, woodworkers and bookbinders.²⁴ Hence, it was the skilled workers who provided the backbone of the OSČ in its early years. The metalworkers offered their premises in the working class district of Karlín for the founding congress which took place on 31 January 1897. The meeting was attended by 108 delegates representing 90 organisations, a further 14 organisations supporting the formation of the OSČ *in absentia*.²⁵ The association consisted overwhelmingly of Czech workers in Bohemia, since the vast majority of Czechs in Moravia, Silesia and particularly Vienna remained loyal to the centralised unions.²⁶

Czech-Austrian Relations

The creation of the OSČ in January 1897 should not be interpreted as a complete, formal break with Vienna. It was rather a tentative step towards the federalisation of the Austrian union movement. The organisational state of the movement became highly complicated. Many of the now federalised Czech groups which formed the OSČ remained part of the old imperial unions and hence were formally still affiliated to Vienna, although their members paid dues to Prague, which in turn transferred a percentage to the central union body. Thus, the OSČ attempt to concentrate and unify Czech Social Democratic union groups met with only partial success as many local and provincial organisations stayed in the Vienna Commission.²⁷

Relations between Prague and Vienna in the years 1897-1906 alternated between hot and cold. The OSČ leaders themselves declared that they did not intend to sever links with their Austrian comrades but to strengthen them mutually, albeit on an equal footing. This desire for improved mutual relations resulted in a joint conference in Brno in August 1900 where it was decided to form "... still firmer and closer ties."²⁸ The main impulse for the "centralisation" drive of 1900-04 was the fact that Czech unions were "none too strong" at a time when the industrial crisis compelled workers to join ranks to defend their interests.²⁹ The total membership of the OSČ in 1900 was only 22,723 and actually dropped in the years 1902-04 to 21,182.³⁰ One reason for this seems to

have been the fact that many Czech unskilled workers were not convinced of the necessity for an independent union movement, but on the contrary placed themselves behind a centralised movement. The OSČ also suffered from financial difficulties, which meant that it could not equal the Vienna Commission in strike benefits and other support schemes.³¹ The early development of the OSČ was thus a slow and difficult process.

The problem of organisation provoked large-scale discussion at union meetings and in trade union periodicals. Some contributors saw the advantages of closer relations with Vienna.³² Others, such as the SDP leader and editor of *Právo lidu*, Antonín Němec, who was more of an internationalist than many of his colleagues, argued in favour of closer ties providing Prague retained influence on the central administration.³³ The OSČ secretary, Roušar, who was considered by the Austrians the "main supporter" of closer relations,³⁴ went even further and raised the possibility of a merger of the two commissions.³⁵ Nothing came of his plans owing to the latent disagreements, although the desire for improved relations did result in other organisational changes. Between 1902 and 1905 many OSČ union groups rejoined their Viennese counterparts, including the most powerful organisation, the metalworkers.³⁶ The number of Czech provincial associations dropped from 48 in 1902 to 27 in 1905, and similarly the number of local groups from 199 to 100.³⁷

The spirit of Czech-Austrian cooperation was typified at the second international congress of trade union secretaries in Stuttgart in June 1902 at which Roušar and Anton Hueber, the head of the Vienna Commission, agreed to recognise the latter as the sole representative of the Empire in the newly created international strike fund. The Czechs insisted that this agreement related only to strike benefit, but that in all other matters the OSČ was to remain autonomous. The Austrian concept of the agreement placed more emphasis on centralisation and the accepted formula of "one state—one trade union centre."

By 1904-05 the rapprochement was beginning to show signs of the strains that had been constantly bubbling under the surface since the formation of the OSČ.³⁸ The fundamental cause of Czech dissatisfaction was once again Vienna's insistence on a strictly centralised form of organisation, a form which Hueber and his colleagues wanted "at any cost" according to Prague. This desire manifested itself at several union conferences at which Czech delegates were regularly outvoted, compelled

to dissolve their independent groups and to transfer them and their property immediately to the Viennese central imperial unions. One such case concerned the Prague Association of Shop Assistants in 1904 which met with stern Czech resistance. Other examples of Austrian centralism angered the Czechs, but the possibility of a more permanent split was not entertained in this period. On the contrary, both Hueber and the OSČ leaders in their communications of late 1904 expressed a clear desire for harmonious relations despite the obvious problems.

It appears that the replacement of the ill Roušar by Josef Steiner as OSČ secretary in 1904 had an important impact on relations between Prague and Vienna. Steiner was of working class origin, self-educated, and apparently had little time for the "Herr Doktors" in Vienna. Other up-and-coming OSČ leaders such as Emanuel Škatula were likewise less inclined to conciliation. It was Škatula who wrote in a letter to the Trade Union International Secretariat in May 1905 that the Austrian Commission considered as its first task "the forceful Germanisation of the Czech trade unionised working class." These telling words epitomise radical Czech nationalist feeling and reveal the real crux of the dispute. Hueber on more than one occasion noted the change of attitude among the Czechs since the new leadership took over and warned that the OSČ was "interfering" in Vienna's internal affairs by attempting to prevent the formation of German union groupings in Prague.

With relations thus strained on the domestic scene the conflict then shifted to the international arena. The fourth international congress of trade union secretaries in Amsterdam in June 1905 proved to be a turning-point in the Prague-Vienna tussle. The Czechs were bitterly disappointed that the OSČ was not invited to send delegates to the congress. Instead Antonín Němec travelled to Amsterdam to put the Czech case, but was permitted only guest status. Speaking in the name of the OSČ he passionately defended the Czechs' right to an independent trade union commission which he said was agreed upon at Stuttgart in 1902. The Czech Social Democratic Party was recognised internationally, so why not the OSČ, he asked. He sought independent representation on the basis of the fundamental social democratic principle of national self-determination. "We are aware that the character of the Czech worker, just as the character of other fully conscious workers, will not endure domination by other nationalities for long." There could be "fateful"

consequences for the entire Austrian trade union movement were this domination to continue. Němec concluded by stating that Viennese centralism could not succeed as the OSČ had been founded by a Czech proletariat that was striving for "its own organisation and its natural rights."

The Austrian position was defended by Hueber. He rejected Němec's claims, arguing that only one trade union centre in any one country could be recognised and for Austria this was the Vienna Commission. He then disclosed what must have been a crucial factor in Vienna's thinking. "There are five great nationalities in Austria and therefore it would be dangerous for the Austrian trade union movement to comply with Czech demands for their own separate representation." The point was crystal clear: no national devolution was to be tolerated. Hueber also insisted that his Commission had three Slav secretaries and paid great attention to language differences. He was backed by all the other delegates from Britain, Denmark, Germany, Holland and Hungary. Karl Legien, the International Secretary, declared "nationality must be eliminated from trade union life . . . language differences must not divide us." This demonstrates the lack of understanding on the part of outsiders towards the Czech case, although Legien assured Němec that the congress decision was not taken in opposition to "Czech nationality" but to splitting tendencies. Hence the Amsterdam congress left Prague isolated, unrecognised and largely misunderstood. The years of reconciliation were coming to an end.

In spite of this international isolation the OSČ leadership had the support of the vast majority of its membership. At a conference of union executive committees and secretaries in September 1905 sixteen out of eighteen imperial unions voted for OSČ independence, one for a merger and one for renewed discussions with Vienna. The Czech dislike for radical action can be seen by the fact that negotiations were continued in spite of this open mandate for independence. A major consideration was the ongoing problem of organisational weakness. By the end of 1905 membership stood at 29,511, a figure which hardly augured well for independent activity.

A joint conference was convened in October 1905 at which the Austrians severely attacked OSČ attempts to expand its legitimacy outside the Czech areas of Bohemia and threatened to sever all links with Prague

should the decentralisation campaign continue unabated. The tension persisted at the extraordinary congress of the Vienna Commission in December. Czech representatives repeated the complaint of Austrian indifference to language rights, citing various examples of journals published in Vienna which were written in such poor Czech that members were unable to understand the texts. This and further misgivings were dismissed by Hueber as "mistakes" caused by "Austrian bureaucratism." The Czech demands for proportional representation on union boards and at national and international congresses were predictably squashed by 197,202 votes to 2,364.

The confrontation reached something of a peak in early 1906. The OSČ leaders accused Vienna of "untimely meddling" in Czech affairs by pressuring imperial unions to pay dues directly to Vienna which would then redistribute the money as it saw fit. The Czechs viewed this as an attempt to force them into financial dependence on the Commission. Steiner reacted quickly to the growing pressure by issuing an appeal to all union groups requesting them to send dues directly to Prague in order to prevent the OSČ from becoming a mere "provincial commission, subordinated to Vienna." The Czech leaders were particularly intent on preventing any extension of this system of dues payment, wishing to gain direct access to members' finances in order to avoid reliance on hand-outs from Vienna. In reply Hueber said that on the contrary it was the OSČ that was interfering in the Commission's affairs and competence by breaking existing arrangements and opposing congress rulings. Many Czech unions had been paying dues to Vienna including the metalworkers, builders and glassworkers and this system had to continue. The matter was put to the unions themselves and in a series of congresses in the course of 1906 most decided on direct payment to Prague, first the metal and chemical workers and finally the miners.

As in the past the Czech SDP gave full support to the OSČ. A board of representatives' meeting in September 1906 issued a statement describing the OSČ as a "component" of the party which would never become politically neutral. The party, however, insisted on the independence of the OSČ and on democratic self-management in union organisations. Since Viennese imperial unions did not always display the "necessary objectivity" when distributing strike benefits, the SDP board saw the "emancipation" of the Czech membership as essentially a "defensive

act" designed to safeguard its natural rights. Nevertheless, the party as a whole was not totally committed to decentralisation. The internationalist wing led by Dr. Bohumír Šmeral adopted an Austro-Marxist stance under the influence of Otto Bauer and to a lesser extent Karl Renner. Šmeral never publicly criticised the OSČ leadership, and indeed did not play an active role in trade union affairs, but he was a known Austrophile, whereas his principal nationalist rivals, František Modráček and Dr. Alfréd Meissner, expounded a theory of "autonomist socialism."³⁹ The crisis in the trade unions exacerbated these differences as tension grew in the period 1909-1911.

As the strains of 1905-06 intensified in the following years, so the Czechs became more assertive, especially in response to the Austrian claim that Czech autonomism was supported by only a small minority of unionised workers.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, it is very difficult to substantiate this claim, since no figures on Czech membership in centralist unions are available. In 1909 approximately 110,000 workers in Bohemia were members of the Vienna Commission,⁴¹ whereas only 70,730 were organised in the OSČ.⁴² More important than this statistical confusion was the fact that the Austrians tended completely to under-estimate the depth of Czech national feeling and cling to old slogans instead of tackling the problems openly. This resulted in a swing away from centralism. As early as 1906 the Union of Shoemakers, which had joined Vienna in 1905, re-affiliated to the OSČ. They were followed by the powerful Union of Metalworkers in 1909 and the miners, leatherworkers, chemical workers and tailors in 1910.⁴³

The appeal of autonomism gradually spread even to Moravia, hitherto a bastion of centralism. Positions of responsibility in centralist unions in Moravia were almost exclusively in German hands, but the Czechs demanded a say in the administration and leadership of those unions where they constituted a majority. The Austrians condemned this as nationalist interference in trade union affairs, but willy-nilly the Czechs began to carry out their threat of occupying leading positions.⁴⁴ Vienna responded by attempting to establish a counter-organisation in Prague aimed at paralysing the heart of Czech autonomism by a decisive struggle against the "national separatists," as Rudolf Tayerle, the leader of the OSČ from 1910, and other Czech unionists were dubbed. The attempt was ultimately unsuccessful although in 1910 the Moravian-based journal

Proletář started publication signalling a new level in the conflict. This pro-Vienna journal launched personal attacks on Czech SDP and OSČ leaders and placed the trade union argument firmly in the political field.⁴⁵ Furthermore, a breakaway "Independent social Democratic Party" was founded by Czech centralist trade unionists in 1910 with Austrian backing. These developments merely served to harden Czech autonomist resolve.

This dispute inevitably took on an international aspect. The German and Austrian Social Democratic Parties were fully committed to the principles of centralism and internationalism, and therefore the problem was brought before the Copenhagen congress of the Second International in August and September 1910. At this forum the Austrians attacked the Czechs as "national separatists" and "chauvinists" and forcefully defended the traditional idea of "one state—one united union centre." The Czechs, once again represented largely by Němec, emphasised the international recognition afforded to their SDP in stark contrast to the isolation of the OSČ.⁴⁶ It was made clear that the Czech party could not function properly, both organisationally and financially, if a substantial part of its membership belonged and paid dues to the Vienna Commission. One delegate, the Russian Marxist Georgii Plekhanov, although opposing the national split on principle, declared,

I understand now the point of the Czechs. . . . They say that only their trade unions have money and so only after separation is carried out can these considerable amounts of money be used by Czech social democrats. . . .⁴⁷

Nevertheless, the congress decided by 222 votes to 5 to condemn the Czech action and called on them to halt their independence campaign.⁴⁸

Despite this clear warning and the subsequent resolution of the Vienna Commission congress in September which demanded the elimination of the Czech movement, the autonomists refused to renounce their claims. A meeting of independent union organisations on 25 September firmly insisted on continued autonomism as did the fifth OSČ congress in October and November. However, even at this late stage both sides realised the desirability of agreement.⁴⁹ Thus joint negotiations were held later

in November. The OSČ-SDP proposals showed signs of compromise: there was to be a cessation of mutual press attacks and of attempts to split the unity of the Czech Social Democratic Party; wage movements, election to workers' corporations and other actions were to be undertaken on a joint basis, although Czechs should belong to Czech organisations and Germans to German; and a joint committee was to decide on controversial issues such as strikes and lock-outs and was to finance such action mutually.

This sense of conciliation was not reciprocated by Vienna at the continuance of the talks in December 1910, despite the fact that the Austrians expounded proposals "for the achievement of peace." The most relevant passages stated that all agitation directed towards the splitting of permanent and local centralist organisations should cease, autonomous unions should limit their activity to those areas in the Czech lands where groups were already established, and no new autonomist groups should be formed in the Czech lands where local centralist unions existed. These proposals were manifestly aimed at severely restricting any extension of OSČ activity even within Bohemia and Moravia, and therefore were quite unacceptable to the Czechs.

Notwithstanding this, the OSČ leadership made one last ditch effort to reach a compromise solution. Though on economic and wage issues the two sides were largely united, the new Czech proposals proved equally unacceptable to Vienna. The main points stipulated that in nationally homogeneous regions the working class should belong to organisations of its own nationality and that independent Czech unions should be represented on the International Secretariat and should participate in international congresses.⁵⁰

The demands were rejected by Vienna. An imperial conference of centralist unions held on 17 March 1911 resolved after a hard-hitting speech by Hueber to postpone any further discussions with OSČ representatives. The Czech proposals were denounced as "separatist" and the OSČ was depicted as defending Czech national aspirations rather than the social needs of the workers.⁵¹ The definitive split had come and with it the growth of independent Czech unions in Moravia and Silesia. By 1911 cities like Brno, Olomouc and Ostrava had become centres of autonomist activity,⁵² and the overall membership of the OSČ rose from 70,000 in 1909 to around 107,000 in 1912.⁵³ The influence

of autonomist organisation and ideas, caused partly by the indifference shown in Vienna to valid national complaints, had spread to all areas of the Czech lands.

This process of national differentiation, although undoubtedly weakening the unity of the Empire's working class, anticipated the total dissolution of the Dual Monarchy in October 1918. Just as the Habsburg rulers could not prevent the complete destruction of the Empire, so the Vienna Commission was unable and unwilling to appease the growing tide of nationalism and indeed was ill-equipped in theory and in practice to do so. The Austrians' implacable insistence on centralism and unity forced the Czechs to seek independent solutions when perhaps a federalised union structure allowing member nations and organisations a certain degree of autonomist self-management may have preserved the cherished unity. The Austrians remained opposed to this compromise and in the final analysis it was this intransigence towards just complaints that caused the split.

Organisational, Economic and Social Policy Problems

As we have seen the main thrust of the OSČ leadership's activity between 1905-11 was directed towards independent, decentralised self-management in its relations with the Vienna Commission. This was not the sole concern. From its foundation in 1897 the OSČ was faced with serious organisational difficulties and with problems in the field of economic and social policy. Like their Social Democratic counterparts in Germany and Austria the Czech leaders, both political and trade unionists, adopted reformist tactics aiming for change within the existing system. The reasons for this non-revolutionary stance are to be found in the organisational structure of the OSČ and in the wider political and economic position of the Czech trade union movement in the Dual Monarchy.

The overriding task of the newly founded OSČ was to concentrate and develop the numerous union and educational groups in Bohemia into Czech provincial associations with district and local administrations. The extremely diverse nature of the trade union movement and the uncertain relationship with Vienna made this task laborious and protracted. Only a few industrial branches had existing provincial structures, namely

the more skilled sectors such as the metal and wood workers, the typographers, tailors and shoemakers.⁵⁴ All the remaining groups were localised without central administration. This was particularly true of the miners who were represented by at least ten small organisations. Thus it is hardly surprising that the OSČ leaders bemoaned "local patriotism" which tended to hinder organisational concentration as well as direct members' attention away from wider issues. On its own admission the OSČ remained for several years an association of predominantly localised educational and subsidiary clubs with a relatively small number of trade union groups.⁵⁵ Indeed one Czech observer later noted that a significant part of unionised workers failed to understand the need for an independent union movement in the early years of the OSČ's existence.⁵⁶

To combat the prevailing local patriotism a detailed organisational programme was published in April 1897. It called for the formation of union groups in all places and the establishment of "provincial," i.e. Czech, associations in each crown land of the monarchy where sufficient numbers of Czech workers were present. These associations were then free to join imperial, i.e. Vienna unions, although the OSČ was to be the "overall representative" and highest administrator of all Czech trade unionists in Austria. This complicated organisational system operated until the split of 1911. Union dues were fixed at one crown per member per month, any organisation three months in arrears being considered to have left the union.⁵⁷ Despite the slow progress, OSČ membership did rise from 7,102 in 1897 to 71,101 in 1907 and to a pre-war peak of 107,263 in 1912.⁵⁸ These figures, however, should be seen in perspective. For example, in 1909 there were 197,979 Czech miners and metalworkers out of an Austrian total of 538,819, but the OSČ Union of Metalworkers had a mere 6,724 members.⁵⁹ In 1912 the Vienna metalworkers' union boasted 60,977 members.⁶⁰ Thus in purely numerical terms revolutionary action was precluded.

Another characteristic feature of the OSČ was that its activity at least until 1910 was almost exclusively confined to Bohemia. The concept of Czech autonomism was weak in Moravia,⁶¹ most Czech workers there and in Silesia and Vienna preferring closer contact with the Austrian Trade Union Commission. Traditional ties and perhaps wariness of Prague centralism were the main reasons for this attitude. Similarly in northern and north western Bohemia the OSČ had very little impact

on the mass of German workers. Following the split of 1911 this situation altered. The organisational build-up of the OSČ became more pronounced. By the end of 1911 district secretarats had been established in Plzeň, Pardubice, Brno, Jihlava and Vienna, Prague being the seat of the central secretariat. Forty local commissions had also been formed.⁶² Hence the independent movement penetrated into Moravia and Vienna, where Czech unions rapidly gained new members. By August 1911 there were 199 union groups in Moravia representing 10,543 workers.⁶³ This process continued more or less unabated until 1914. Thus on the eve of World War I the OSČ in organisational terms was a relatively blossoming association which had overcome major obstacles to become the single largest and most influential Czech trade union centre.

As we have seen, the example of the German and Austrian Social Democrats, coupled with the organisational problems confronting the OSČ, reinforced the non-revolutionary attitudes of the Czechs. The OSČ leaders displayed their reformist colours nowhere more so than in the important area of strike strategy. The directives issued in April 1897 decreed that any organisation preparing a strike had to obtain OSČ ratification and support at least six weeks in advance. If prior permission was not sought the union would forfeit all claims to financial benefits unless the strike was against worsening conditions. Even then such actions were to be undertaken only if the OSČ central board was convinced that all attempts at arbitration had failed. Strike benefits would be distributed only after the first eight days of the dispute, and all groups and individuals were instructed to adhere strictly to these decisions.⁶⁴

Clearly the OSČ leaders placed great emphasis on organised, centrally-controlled strikes. The directives were intended to prevent local union groups from undertaking wild-cat strikes and spontaneous action. Such strikes would *not* obtain the leadership's support and participants would *not* receive financial assistance. This strategy demonstrated the Czech trade union leaders' distaste for militant, non-organised activity and illustrated their commitment to gradualist policies based on compromise, arbitration and conciliation.

This does not mean to say that the OSČ totally opposed strike action. For example between 1906 and 1908 OSČ unions were involved in 849 strikes and wage campaigns in which 110,208 workers participated. Most

of these actions were taken in the textile, mining and metal industries and resulted in the sacking of 7,632 workers. Fear of employer reprisals was a constant worry for union chiefs and "calm thought and consideration" had to be given in order to assess the right moment to strike.⁶⁵ In the years 1911-1913 the number of strikes rose to 1,316 involving 184,025 employees. The majority achieved "partial success,"⁶⁶ without affecting the underlying trend of unemployment and inflation.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, in the period immediately preceding World War I Czech workers did extract higher wages, conclude collective agreements and improve their working conditions, albeit only marginally.⁶⁸ The OSČ played an important role in these achievements owing to its willingness to negotiate with employers, flex its industrial muscle when necessary and provide financial and moral support to its membership. To this extent reformism was successful in alleviating some of the many hardships endured by Czech workers.

By 1914 then reformism had firm roots in the Czech labour movement, a fact which reflected political realities in Austria and Bohemia. Even Bohumír Šmeral, the Marxist internationalist, acknowledged in 1904 that no revolutionary forces existed in the Czech lands capable of overthrowing the Austrian state.⁶⁹ Moreover, he agreed that "orthodox Marxist socialism is . . . the clearest negation of autonomist tendencies as expressed in the national, cooperative and trade unionist idea in the Czech proletariat."⁷⁰ Nationalism caused riots but not revolutionary situations. Neither leading Czech Social Democrats nor the workers themselves were given psychologically to volatile, radical gestures. Most believed that parliamentary and electoral reform together with limited economic and social improvements in working class conditions would lead eventually to a new socialist system. Social reform rather than social revolution was the main goal and it is within this context of gradualist, autonomist socialism linked to non-revolutionary nationalism that the actions of the OSČ and SDP should be viewed in the years 1897-1914.

OSČ Activity during World War I

"War, famine, inflation, massive strikes, an influenza epidemic that was worse than the war, the break-up of the Dual Monarchy, the collapse of the front, the birth of new states and complete political reorganisation . . ."

is how one author has described the momentous events in the Austrian Empire in the period 1914-1918.⁷¹ The Czech trade union movement and working class did not escape the radical changes and tremendous hardships. Indeed the OSČ was "almost completely smashed."⁷²

For those Czechs fortunate enough not to suffer the horrendous conditions in the Austrian army, the situation at home grew progressively bleak. Inflation was rampant—according to one western historian, prices rose fifteenfold in the war years.⁷³ For instance, in 1914 one kilo of potatoes cost 12 halers, but in 1917 it cost 28 and on the black market anywhere between one and two crowns; one egg cost 8 halers in 1914, but 90 in 1917 and a kilo of tea cost 8 crowns in 1914 but 140 in 1917.⁷⁴ Food shortages were drastic owing to the complete disorganisation of production and supply, and consequently the black market flourished. The entire economy was in disarray. Industrial output, which temporarily rose in the first year of the war, slumped. Coal production declined throughout the war and the total productivity of labour likewise fell largely owing to the under-nourishment of the workforce. Although wages generally rose, the real income of most workers decreased markedly vis à vis pre-war levels, civil servants and private employees being worst hit.⁷⁵ Hence, the physical and mental condition of the Austrian population, the state of the economy and the combined political and military situation of the Dual Monarchy were desperate by mid-1918. It is against this background that the OSČ attempted to maintain union activity and defend the interests of its members.

The task was all but insurmountable before 1917. Already in the first half of 1914 organisational life had been hard hit by high employment resulting in a reduction of membership. From July to September 1914 over 20 percent of members were conscripted, i.e. 18,105 workers. Similarly 28 percent of union functionaries were sent to the front, including Alois Muna from Prostějov who was to play an important role in the formation of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia after the war.⁷⁶ Total membership of the OSČ slumped from 104,574 in 1913 to 55,178 by the end of 1914, a drop of almost 50 percent.⁷⁷ Several local commissions were forced to fold and by December 1914 only 48 were left in operation. The publication of union journals was also badly disrupted.⁷⁸ The years 1915 and 1916 marked the low point in OSČ fortunes. In some places, notably the vital coal mining region around Moravská Ostrava,

district meetings were banned by the authorities and in 1915 no major union conferences were held. By the end of 1916 membership stood at approximately 24,000 and "the Central Commission of the OSČ struggled to maintain at least some semblance of organisational activity . . ."⁷⁹ With membership so low the financial state of the union was chronic, obviously restricting activity still further.⁸⁰

Conditions in the factories and mines were extremely arduous because of the introduction of military management. Militarisation of the mines, railways and munitions works caused acute resentment among Czech workers. The working day was extended to twelve hours and military discipline allowed for protesters to be sent to the front.⁸¹ On top of the overall physical and mental deterioration, worsening working conditions and longer hours, the labour force was subjected to ruthless discipline and harsh punishments. Strikes were outlawed, although some did occur and were considered mutinous, and freedom of assembly was drastically limited by law. The influence of militarisation was still evident as late as September 1918. According to Dr. Alfred Meissner speaking at the sixth OSČ congress, miners at Falknov (Sokolov) were ordered to the front in May 1918 for participating in a strike, and shop-stewards in Prague were actually imprisoned for collecting money for the striking miners. Meissner argued that the militarisation of the factories was a concerted effort conducted by both the employers and the Austrian state with the aim of extracting maximum profits and productivity from the workers. It was a failure as production fell daily, at least in the majority of industries, and resentment ran high against German employers and the Austrian military government.⁸²

The hunger demonstrations of February and March 1917 exerted growing pressure on the government to pacify a restless, war-weary populace. Its one major concession was the law of March 1917 which established a system of Complaint Commissions. This was an attempt to gain legitimacy on the part of a regime universally seen as incompetent, inefficient, corrupt and blatantly unequal. The food shortages and subsequent triumph of the black marketeers together with the disorganisation of the civilian and military bureaucracies aggravated an already tense national situation.⁸³ The Complaint Commissions were in practice unfair and reflected the reluctance of employers and the military administration to discuss seriously workers' wages and working conditions.

Only one worker-representative sat on the five-man commission, the rest being composed of one employer, one officer and two civilian bureaucrats. The Ministry of National Defence appointed the chairman and the OSČ described the entire composition of the commissions as "totally unacceptable."⁸⁴

The Commissions did, however, recommend some wage increases, notably for the skilled metalworkers in Vítkovice, Plzeň and Prague.⁸⁵ This increase was especially welcome given the fact that earnings in the Czech lands were as much as 40 percent lower than in Vienna where the workers were generally better organised than in Bohemia.⁸⁶ Indeed, the Austrian example and the limited concessions made by the Complaint Commissions helped to prove to Czech workers that progress could be made by organising themselves in strong unions. This realisation, allied to growing Czech nationalism in the second half of 1917 and the desire for a more equal, humane society free from the terrors of war, probably accounts for the rapid influx of new members into the OSČ. This "flood" of members demonstrated a basic faith in traditional labour organisations,⁸⁷ particularly in Bohemia where more militant forms of organisation such as workers' councils remained largely confined to the radical mining and steel producing area of Kladno.⁸⁸ OSČ membership rose from 23,932 in 1916 to 42,728 in 1917, to 68,000 in June 1918 and to 75,000 at the time of the sixth congress in September 1918.⁸⁹ This represented an increase of over 200 percent in the space of twenty months. The biggest increases occurred in the metal, railway, textile and coal-mining industries. For example, the Union of Metalworkers rose from 4,294 members in 1916 to 21,402 in June 1918 and the Union of Miners from 1,189 to 7,875 in the same period.⁹⁰

However, the OSČ was badly structured organisationally to assimilate the influx of new members. It was lacking financial resources and experienced union functionaries, and a long history of craft unionism was not ideally suited to the mass factory and the impulse towards industrial unions. As Tayerle said that the sixth congress, the new members and officials lacked experience in union methods and organisation and he was quick to emphasise the need for measures to protect the interests of young members. He also called for intensified "educational propaganda," presumably intended to exert a moderating influence on the more radical elements. The same went for women workers in the OSČ, who were paid

much lower wages than men. Tayerle viewed the influx of women and young workers as an important development in the trade union movement,⁹¹ although it is quite possible that it aroused fear among some union leaders who felt the new members might prove difficult to control.

The increased radicalism among the Czech working class in 1918 was sparked more by nationalist and economic demands than revolutionary political and social ones. This remained the case even after news of the Russian Revolution spread to Bohemia. It is most difficult to judge the effect of the Bolshevik Revolution on the Czech trade union movement. Accurate, detailed reports were sparse and very few people were well-informed about events in Russia. The official OSČ journal and the influential metalworkers' organ, *Zájmy kovodělníku* (Interests of the Metalworkers), carried little if any information on the October Revolution throughout late 1917 and 1918. Other important periodicals like the miners' *Na zdar* (For Success), and the woodworkers' *Dřevodělnické listy* (Woodworkers' Paper) were more sympathetic. The latter stated in August 1918 that "what the Bolsheviks have done in Russia is not bad," but earlier agreed that "the Russian republic in its present state is not an ideal model,"⁹² Škatula speaking at the sixth OSČ congress went even further, arguing that "no rational person would blindly follow the Russian example," since conditions and circumstances differed everywhere. The OSČ must instead follow the road of what he paradoxically termed "revolutionary-evolution," i.e. the aims of the trade union movement were to include both immediate, short-term reforms and the long-term victory of socialism achieved by a joint struggle with the SDP for political power.⁹³

It appears then that the Bolshevik Revolution had only a limited *direct* influence on the Czech labour movement, although in the Kladno area the concept of workers' and soldiers' councils did take root. Nevertheless, as Věra Olivová has pointed out, the Russian Revolution on a broader level "...acted as a catalyst in Bohemia" by propagating a radical, class programme and by demanding the self-determination of nations. "The existence of an independent Czechoslovak state now became a distinct possibility . . . ,"⁹⁴

The general strike of January 1918 voiced the demands for self-determination and peace, but in contrast to Vienna revolutionary political aims were less evident in Bohemia.⁹⁵ The fusion of Czech nationalism

and socialism placed more emphasis on the former throughout the eventful year of 1918. The Czech working class became imbued with the concepts of self-determination and Czech national independence., but at the same time most workers took it for granted that their social and economic standing would improve after the war. This idea of "national socialism" was supported and propagated by the majority of SDP and OSČ leaders, as the influence of Masarykian "Realist" and National Socialist trends became increasingly popular.

The OSČ response to the proclamation of independence on 28 October 1918 revealed this fusion of national and social ideas. Above all the creation of the Czechoslovak Republic fulfilled "the desires and hopes of the Czech working class." The common aim now was to place the new state's economy and society on firm foundations. Workers were exhorted to continue normal production in the factories and mines for "the stronger the Czech state the greater will be social understanding. . . ." Social equality was to be the "guiding star" of the new republic and to this end a comprehensive social policy programme was drafted.⁹⁶ In the author's opinion, it was precisely this combination of nationalist euphoria and gradualist social reform which weakened the impact of revolutionary theories in the Czech lands between 1917 and 1919.

In October 1918 the renamed OSČ (*Československé*, Czechoslovak replacing *Českoslovanské*, Czechoslav) was primarily an organisation of Czech blue-collar workers based on both skilled and unskilled labourers in the metal, railway, mining and textile industries. Skilled craftsmen, such as printers, typographers and bookbinders, were also represented. Although it organised only a small minority of the working class, this situation was to change rapidly in the early post-war years. In the organisational sphere, craft unionism formed the basis of the OSČ with fifty different member unions in June 1918.⁹⁷ Tayerle himself expressed concern about this form of organisation, which tended to divide and weaken the workforce. At the sixth congress he called for the "merger of related unions" (*slučování příbuzných odborů*).⁹⁸ The roots of craft unionism were so strong that this proved a formidable task and was far from complete by the time of the seventh congress in January 1922.

The ultimate goal of the OSČ was a "...new and better socialist social order," based on "Czech democratic socialism."⁹⁹ In the economic and social fields socialism was to be achieved by improved wage relations,

legally binding collective contracts, an eight hour working day, unemployment benefits, sickness, accident and invalid insurance, inflation bonuses and a host of similar reforms. These measures were to be implemented in consultation with the state authorities. As a resolution of the sixth congress declared, "trade unions cannot renounce . . . parliamentary and legislative means of building the foundations of a new social order."¹⁰⁰ OSČ leaders may on occasion have used radical rhetoric, but this system of social reform remained the core of their programme.

Some words are needed here on the extremely close relationship between the OSČ and SDP. As noted above, both were theoretically Marxist and adopted the prevailing trend of reformism and parliamentarianism under the influence of German and Austrian Social Democracy. OSČ leaders took pains to stress the independent nature of the unions. As Tayerle said, "trade union organisations must be socialist, but should not be dependent on a political party . . ."¹⁰¹ Any worker should be able to join the OSČ regardless of his or her political convictions. Notwithstanding this, since 1897 the ties between the union and the party had become tightly interwoven, particularly among the leading strata. Several high-ranking union officials, including Tayerle, Antonín Hampl, Vilém Brodecký, Karel Brožík, Josef Teska and others, were also important figures in the SDP and future parliamentary deputies.¹⁰² Certain party leaders, such as Němec, took a keen interest in union affairs and contributed in no small measure to the split with the Vienna Commission. Thus in reality the two organisations were linked by theory, practice and personal connections, which tends to cast doubt on Tayerle's subsequent notion of trade union "neutrality." What is more the relationship remained close throughout the 1920s.

CHAPTER TWO

TOWARDS THE SPLIT IN THE OSČ

The formation of Czechoslovakia on 28 October 1918 satisfied the national aspirations of the vast majority of Czechs and Slovaks. It is not within the scope of the present work to examine the events leading up to the "revolution" of October. Much has been written on this subject. More relevant for our purposes is a discussion of the political, economic and social problems faced by the new state in the early post-war years. Economic hardships, social discontent and the rift in the Social Democratic Workers' Party, which culminated in the founding of a unified Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in the autumn of 1921, were all prerequisites for the eventual split in the trade union movement. Similarly, the creation in Moscow of the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU or Profintern) in July 1921 acted as a catalyst in the left-right dispute in the OSČ. This ideological and tactical conflict tore the union asunder and resulted in the establishment of an independent communist trade union centre in October 1922.

Economic Difficulties and Labour Legislation

The popular elation felt at the founding of the independent state was soon shaken, although not destroyed by political and economic realities.¹ The majority of Czech and Slovak citizens expected changes for the

better. President Masaryk himself had grasped the sentiments of his fellow countrymen when he said,

the World War definitely showed that the whole social order was in need of a fundamental reform. The revolution which the war carried out in the arrangement of European affairs had also to express itself in the economic and social fields.²

The policies of the overthrown Austrian regime would not suffice, although many former bureaucrats remained in office and old laws remained operative.³ New policies were needed to solve the vast economic difficulties which faced Czechoslovakia between 1918 and 1921.

The war had devastated the country's transport system, new markets had to be found and foreign trade barriers overcome. In 1918 industrial employment fell to around two-thirds of the pre-war figure, and output amounted to only 50 percent of 1913 levels. As noted above, prices had risen fifteenfold during the war and wages had lagged behind.⁴ Wage increases were common in 1918 and 1919, but inflation continued to outpace earnings throughout the period.⁵ The demobilisation of the army caused mass unemployment, figures reaching a peak of 267,000 jobless in February 1919. Unemployment levels remained high until mid 1920, when the numbers dropped to 53,500.⁶ Thus, general economic instability typified the first years of Czechoslovakia's existence, as it did for all nations in central Europe. The measures adopted by Finance Minister Alois Rašín, although helping to curb the worst excesses of inflation, were highly unpopular.⁷ Life was certainly not easy for the majority of Czechoslovaks.

The one problem which aroused widespread anger was the chronic lack of food supplies and subsequent rise of profiteering. In 1918, output of the main crops and potatoes was less than half the pre-war average. Livestock had declined by one third (cattle) and by more than a half (pigs).⁸ One respected commentator later described the situation thus:

. . . although the people expected that suffering would be relieved . . . the real state was such that the country was on the verge of starvation . . . The war had exhausted all the reserves of food, raw materials and manufactured products . . .

Clothing and shoes in particular were in desperately short supply.⁹ Hence it is hardly surprising that the National Committee devoted much discussion to the problem and proclaimed, "the provision of bread and work is our first aim . . ."¹⁰ A report from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Public Supplies dated 7 January 1919 stated,

inquiries . . . disclose scenes of such distress and starvation that one frequently wonders why these people, including high officials, do not give in totally to beggary.¹¹

Black marketeers and profiteers were universally detested. Another official report from the Ministry of the Interior, also in January 1919, called on provincial political committees to exert "unyielding determination" in their efforts against black marketeers, who were demanding provocatively high prices for essential goods.¹² This had led to public disturbances in many places, including hunger riots in November 1918 in several north Bohemian towns. There was also a huge anti-inflation demonstration in Prague in May 1919 with placards saying, "Death to profiteers."¹³ Popular anti-profititeer courts set up by the law of May 1919 were empowered to hand out penalties of up to five years, but proved largely ineffective.¹⁴ Social discontent ran high and some government officials and foreign powers feared the spread of Bolshevik activity from neighbouring states where revolutionary changes were taking place in the wake of military and political collapse. Such fears were not entirely unfounded, although social discontent in Czechoslovakia rarely took on serious political connotations. It was spontaneous action directed against the poor food supply and black marketeers, not organised rebellion. However, the threat was enough to force concessions even from leading conservative figures like Prime Minister Karel Kramář, who said, "if the capitalist is to receive less or even much less than he gets nowadays, this will not be any great misfortune."¹⁵

The strength and dynamism of the spontaneous popular movement, together with the powerful camp of socialist-minded deputies in the provisional National Assembly, who often had behind them the formidable weight of President Masaryk himself, thus compelled the National Democrats, Agrarians and other non-socialist parties to yield to worker demands.¹⁶ The outcome was comprehensive labour legislation and a

social welfare programme designed partly to appease worker indignation and partly to demonstrate a genuine willingness to create a socially equitable state in line with Masaryk's humanist philosophy.

To this end a series of laws were enacted by the National Assembly starting in December 1918. In response to mass unemployment a law was ratified introducing state unemployment benefits for any worker not responsible for the loss of his or her job. The period of assistance, originally intended to be six months, was extended later to 18 months in certain trades and areas. It amounted to 8-18 Kčs (crowns) per day, and by the end of 1922 these supports are reported to have represented 20.6 percent of the average daily wage, compared to 18.7 percent in England, 11.3 percent in Austria, 9.5 percent in Germany and 8 percent in France.¹⁷ The law remained valid until April 1925 when it was superseded by the so-called Ghent System, whereby trade union organisations bore the financial brunt of supporting unemployed members.¹⁸

An important concession was won, also in December, with the enactment of law no. 91 providing for an eight-hour working day and maximum 48 hour week for all industrial and agricultural employees. Overtime was restricted to two hours a day for not more than twenty weeks in the year. The eight-hour day had been a long-standing worker demand, since under the Dual Monarchy it was customary to work up to eleven hours a day.¹⁹ However, the law merely legalised existing local agreements in Kladno and among iron and machine workers, who had won shorter working time in November.²⁰ The same law also prohibited the employment of women and adolescents under the age of sixteen in mines and other arduous occupations. No one under fourteen was permitted to work, and adolescents and women were exempted from night shifts.²¹

A tenant's protection act was passed in response to the acute housing shortage in Prague and other large cities. The law prohibited rent increases and the eviction of tenants until suitable alternative accommodation was available.²² In April and May 1919 improvements were made in sickness, accident and invalid insurance schemes,²³ although the single most important law on worker insurance and pensions was passed in October 1924.²⁴ State assistance to war veterans and dependent survivors of those killed in the war was granted under the law of February 1920, and between then and 1925 over half a million veterans received pensions.²⁵

A further measure of great social significance was the law on Land Reform ratified in April 1919. It was designed to reduce the distinct

inequities in land ownership, whereby before 1914 1,000 inhabitants owned 26 percent of the total area of Czechoslovakia.²⁶ The reform programme continued in to the 1930s, but with only partial success. Of the 4,068,370 hectares originally assigned for redistribution, only 1,800,782 were parcelled out to new proprietors. Of the rest, 1,831,920 hectares were restored to the former owners, and 435,668 were still to be allotted by 1937. Of the 1,800,782 hectares redistributed, 1,016,109 were given over to private farmers, the rest (mostly forest and pasture land) being assigned to municipalities and cooperatives. Thus, a mere 25 percent of the land intended for redistribution was actually allotted to individuals. To this extent, one could say that the reform was unsuccessful in its intention to reduce significantly the unequal distribution of land. Nevertheless, 638,182 small farmers increased their holdings and social justice was seen to be done.²⁷

Perhaps the most important contribution to labour legislation was the law on Factory Councils (*Závodní rady*) passed in February 1920, and its corollary the law on Factory Committees (*Závodní výbory*) of August 1921. These two laws were:

... called into existence largely under the influence of the revolutions in Russia, Germany and Austria. They were a partial surrender to the proletariat, who were then loudly demanding a socialisation of production, especially production of a highly concentrated character, as is the case in mining concerns. . . . They were, however, not established under the direct revolutionary pressure of the proletariat but are the work of a democratic compromise made by representatives of all classes in the legislative bodies.²⁸

Indeed, Social Democratic deputies had to agree reluctantly to certain unwelcome measures of fiscal reform in order to secure passage of the law of 1921.

The factory council law provided for the creation of councils in every mining concern employing over twenty workers. They were to be composed of three to seventeen members, according to the number of employees. All workers over the age of eighteen were entitled to vote, providing they had worked for at least six months in the factory. The principal aims of the councils were to co-supervise the observance of regulations on

the protection of labour and on hygienic conditions within the enterprise; to suggest proposals for improvements in production; to supervise the introduction and observance of wage agreements; to cooperate with management in formulating rules governing the dismissal of workers and the preservation of discipline; to mediate in disputes and to inspect the annual balance accounts of the enterprise.

The law also provided for the establishment of District Mining Councils (*Revírní rady*), which were to direct and coordinate the activities of factory councils on a regional basis. They were empowered to act as forums of appeal in disputes between the factory council and management.²⁹ The latter was represented on the council by one technical and one commercial official, who were to offer advice.³⁰ All controversial issues between the councils and management were to be solved by special Mining Arbitration Courts (*Hornické rozhodčí soudy*).³¹ Although the provisions for factory council activity were extensive, it was "...not authorised to meddle with the administration and the operation of the concern by giving independent orders."³² The council was thus largely a consultative body. In terms of application, the law was successful. Councils were established in all mining areas and continued to function throughout the 1920s.

The law on Factory Committees, ratified eighteen months later, was, as its name suggests, not as far-reaching, the term "committee" being seen as less revolutionary than "council." The intervening period had marked the ebbing of the revolutionary tide, as reflected in the wording of the law. A factory committee was to be established in all enterprises, other than mining concerns, employing thirty or more workers. In Germany and Austria the figure was twenty.³³ The broad goal of the committee was "...to defend and stimulate the economic, social and cultural interests of the employees. . . ." More exactly, this entailed supervision over the introduction of wage and labour agreements, and over the observance of welfare regulations, namely protection against accident, the safeguarding of hygienic working conditions and the insurance of employees. The committee was obliged to cooperate with management on maintaining labour discipline and be responsible for "good relations" between employer and employee, and among the workers themselves. This involved arbitration in religious, political and trade union disputes. Finally, the committee could act in an advisory capacity against the unfair

dismissal of any worker employed for three consecutive years in the factory by taking the matter to an Arbitration Commission.³⁴

The Social Democratic left was highly critical of the law, particularly this last point. The leader of the Union of Woodworkers, Josef Teska, argued that workers, according to existing collective agreements, had the right of co-decision on the sacking of employees, not merely consultation.³⁵ In general terms, although the law was presented as a radical socialist measure, it tended to weaken the workers' position in certain industries and areas, especially the Kladno-Slany region where workers' councils had been in existence without legal sanction since November 1918.³⁶ These revolutionary councils possessed greater powers than their legal counterparts and hence one can conclude that the laws were aimed at preventing the monopolisation of the council movement by the Marxist Left.³⁷ Its representatives, like Teska, labelled the law "a disgraceful compromise, made on parliamentary grounds."³⁸ Right and centre Social Democrats, on the other hand, while harbouring certain reservations about the law, saw it as "... a basis for new workers' rights" in the struggle for "... a higher social and economic level."³⁹ For them, it represented the maximum that could be expected from the government in the existing harsh economic situation.

Within a short space of time the new state had legally improved working conditions. But how effective were the labour laws? Did they dispel worker dissatisfaction and fulfill the hopes and dreams of a "paradise on earth?"⁴⁰ If we consider the demands put forward by a group of Škoda shop-stewards in November 1918 as representative, then several were indeed fulfilled by the enactments of late 1918 and early 1919. The demands included the expropriation of the great estates, full freedom of assembly and press, the punishment of wartime profiteers by "people's courts," the extension of workers' pension and invalid insurance schemes, the introduction of unemployment benefits and the eight hour working day.⁴¹ However, to pass laws is one thing, to execute them in practice is another. Complaints were heard that the laws were merely "fine words," which remained largely "on paper," especially in the more backward agricultural areas of Slovakia and Ruthenia and in smaller factories.⁴² Employers were adept at finding loopholes in the wording of the laws and were often unwilling to implement them correctly. In view of this,

it is not surprising that many workers, although welcoming the new legislation, soon became rather disillusioned. This feeling was reinforced by the continuing economic crisis.

Throughout 1919 and 1920 the overall economic situation remained poor. Prices of essential goods and foodstuffs continued to rise, while wage increases failed to keep pace with inflation.⁴³ According to OSČ figures, the price of one kilo of pork rose from 2 crowns in June 1914, to 42 crowns in June 1920, one kilo of butter from 3.90 crowns to 60, one kilo of rice from 48 halers to 18 crowns, one kilo of coffee from 4 crowns to 60, a loaf of bread from 50 halers to 2 crowns, a litre of milk from 30 halers to 3.50 crowns, a kilo of potatoes from 10 halers to 1.80 crowns and a pair of men's shoes from 16 crowns to 320 crowns.⁴⁴ In the months after October 1918 earnings rose between 25-50 percent and inflation bonuses were granted to the skilled metalworkers of Vítkovice, Plzeň, Brno and Kladno. Miners in north Bohemia achieved a 50 percent wage increase, but builders and other workers had to be content with 25-35 percent.⁴⁵ Wages differed from area to area. The miners of the Ostrava-Karviná basin received higher wages than the men in Kladno, which is one reason for the latter region's militancy.⁴⁶ Indeed miners generally were less well-paid than one would expect. In January 1921 their average weekly wage was 230 crowns, while metalworkers received 325 crowns. Builders and woodworkers each earned 215 crowns, brewery-workers 180 crowns, and textile workers a mere 145 crowns.⁴⁷ Clearly, it must have been hard to make ends meet for the average family.

As we have seen, discontent with the poor food supply was greatly exacerbated by private profiteering. As late as January 1920, an OSČ report highlighted the continued shortages of foodstuffs and the resultant flourishing black market. The report urged that government measures against profiteers be stringently enforced, since the law of May 1919 establishing special courts to deal with black marketeers had proved ineffective. The OSČ also proposed that the supply of food be placed under state control in order to ensure legal distribution. A strong protest was likewise lodged against "the new burden placed on the unpropertied strata via direct and indirect taxes."⁴⁸ Taxes had been raised by the ever unpopular Rašín, which may have been one of the causes of his assassination in 1923.⁴⁹

Unemployment, particularly in 1919, remained a serious problem. In February of that year there were 267,000 people out of work, partly owing to the demobilisation of the army. An OSČ central council report to the Ministry of Finance in May 1919 stated that many textile, shoe-making and tanning factories had ceased production because of the lack of raw materials, coal and export markets. The building industry was "paralysed," leading to high levels of unemployed bricklayers. To alleviate the plight of the unemployed, the OSČ suggested to the Ministry of Social Security that benefits should be increased a hundredfold, a proportion of which was to be paid by industrial and commercial entrepreneurs. However, by April 1920 the number of jobless had dropped to 53,561, and although it rose to over 100,000 in 1921 the unemployment problem receded between mid-1920 and late 1922.⁵⁰

Given the impoverished state of many workers, labour and social welfare legislation on the whole failed to assuage popular discontent, partly because of its limited scope and partly because it was not always properly enforced. In the revolutionary wave of 1918-1920, radical sections of the working class and militant political and trade union leaders were bound to view such legislation as a piecemeal effort designed to patch up the crumbling edifice of capitalism. Having said this, it should be noted that Czechoslovakia was far more advanced than many of her neighbours and that negative attitudes to economic conditions did not automatically signify political opposition. The majority of Czechs and Slovaks remained loyal to the republic, but a sizeable minority did demand more radical solutions to the nation's problems. One of the left's most popular demands was that of socialisation.

The issue of socialisation was of vital importance in driving a wedge between the left and right wings of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Workers' Party. To a certain extent, it also accounted for the unpopularity of the Social Democratic led coalition government of Vlastimil Tusar in the period July 1919 to September 1920. The call for immediate socialisation, especially among miners, was voiced frequently and indeed, according to Peroutka, it "seemed so imminent" in late 1918 and 1919 that people took it for granted.⁵¹ But what was actually meant by the term "socialisation?"

A resolution of the sixth OSČ congress in September 1918 defined it somewhat vaguely as the transfer of the private means of production

into collective ownership. More detailed plans were worked out first in August 1919 and again in May 1920. The former stated that mines, iron-works, waterworks and power-stations should be the property either of the state or of the region or municipality. Employees should be represented on the factory management. The Socialisation Programme of May 1920 emphasised the gradual nature of implementing such plans, "... according to economic conditions and scientific methods..." Socialisation was to go beyond nationalisation by guaranteeing the "... equal participation of the workers in production," which would "prevent harmful bureaucratisation..." The OSČ then listed three types of socialisation: state property and direct state control; municipal property and direct local control; and joint associations composed of representatives from the state or municipality, the employees and consumers.

State management was necessary in nationwide concerns, such as railways, munition factories, post and telegraph services, while coal and ore mines were to be state property also, but run by an association of state, employee and consumer representatives. Factory committees should have an effective say in the management of non-socialised enterprises, and hence strong official SDP and OSČ support was forthcoming for the two laws on industrial democracy. "Co-management and co-decision making" were the slogans of the centre-right.⁵² For them, socialisation meant state or local management of industry with effective worker participation. It did *not* mean the total control of industry by the workers.

Despite the theorising, much of the socialisation programme was doomed to remain on paper, as the Social Democratic leaders were never totally committed to it and "broke with the feelings of the masses."⁵³ They emphasised the unfavourable economic conditions, the lack of maturity of the working class, domestic opposition from the Agrarians, National Democrats and Masaryk himself, and the hostility of foreign powers to radical socialist measures.⁵⁴ The President encapsulated these misgivings when he wrote in January 1921 that given the mutual dependency of states, no individual country could afford "to put into effect a profound change in economic and ownership relations against the will of foreign countries."⁵⁵ The case had been graphically illustrated by the Slovak Soviet Republic in June 1919 which had collapsed after the Allied powers issued an ultimatum to Béla Kun to withdraw his troops from Eastern Slovakia.⁵⁶ Certainly, wariness of foreign reaction was one of

the reasons why large-scale socialisation was not introduced in Czechoslovakia.

The left responded predictably. In the years 1919-1920, the left was a non-homogeneous grouping of radical Czech Social Democrats, pro-Bolshevik legionaires and prisoners returned from Russia, German radicals led by Karel Kreibich based in the Liberec (Reichenberg) SDP district organisation, discontented Slovak, Ruthenian, Hungarian, Polish and Jewish nationals, and anarchist groups around Stanislav K. Neumann and Emanuel Vajtauer. Radicalised by domestic crisis, the ideas of the Bolshevik Revolution and the revolutionary wave that swept Central Europe in 1918-1920, these elements attacked the Social Democratic leadership for compromising with bourgeois politicians and reneging on the promise of socialisation. The Marxist Left, however, had no cogent alternatives to these policies. Rhetoric about world revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat and workers', soldiers' and peasants' councils was too abstract to appeal to the mass of the Czech working class.⁵⁷ The left failed to produce detailed plans for socialisation and possessed little understanding of the economic and social preconditions necessary for such a major departure.

Notwithstanding this, the Marxist Left, led by Bohumír Šmeral, proved capable of winning adherents in the SDP. This is not the place to discuss the rift in the Social Democratic Party and the formation of the Communist Party. These dramatic events have been well documented elsewhere in Western studies.⁵⁸ Suffice it to say here that the creation and consolidation of a mass Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (*Komunistické strana Československa*—KSČ) acted as an ideological and organisational inspiration to the emerging revolutionary opposition in the OSČ. As we shall see the relationship between the KSČ and the union leftists was far from straightforward, but before tackling this crucial question it is necessary to outline some of the immediate post-war developments in the Czechoslovak trade union movement.

Unification and Growth

The trade union movement in the months following World War I was in a chaotic state, mirroring Czechoslovak society as a whole. Deep divisions along political, national and religious lines made the problem of

unification particularly pressing. Czech, Slovak, German, Hungarian and Polish Social Democratic unions, National Socialist unions, Christian Social unions and Czech centralist organisations based in Vienna all competed for the loyalties of the working class. The desire for unity, fostered by national euphoria and solidarity, was strong among both the memberships and, to a lesser extent, the leaderships of these divergent organisations, save the German-Bohemian and Christian Social unions.⁵⁹ Already in April and June 1918 unsuccessful negotiations were held between the OSČ and the National Socialist union, the Czech Workers' Society (*Česká obec dělnická*—ČOD). A third joint meeting took place on 1 October 1919, but as in the earlier discussions conflict broke out over the relationship of unions to political parties. The ČOD representatives emphasised that the former should “lean on” (*opírat se*) and develop closer relations with the latter. Their OSČ counterparts, fearing reliance on parties would impinge on union autonomy, maintained that the merger of trade unions should not be dependent on the amalgamation of parties, since internal political disputes could threaten union unity. This deadlock effectively ended all hope of a merger between the OSČ and ČOD.⁶⁰

The OSČ was more successful in its dealings with the Czech centralist unions, which had remained in the Vienna Trade Union Commission at the time of the split in 1911. After the creation of Czechoslovakia the Czech organisations in Austria could not realistically survive as small, isolated groups in a foreign country, and therefore on 23 November 1918 a meeting was held between the OSČ and centralists at which an agreement was reached on the amalgamation of the two bodies. By February 1919 the centralist groups had been incorporated into the OSČ. Similarly, the Czechoslovak SDP and centralist party merged in early 1919.⁶¹

This success was matched by the unification of the Czech and Slovak Social Democratic unions also in early 1919. Discussions commenced on 28 December 1918, when the Slovaks expressed their willingness to join the OSČ. The latter promised to establish an all-trade union secretariat in Slovakia and publish a Slovak-language union journal. A second conference met at Vrútky on 2 February 1919 and created a secretariat at nearby Ružomberok and elected a provincial central union body, *Krajinská odborová rada* (Regional Trade Union Council). This was soon

followed by a secretariat in Bratislava. A Slovak journal was founded, *Priekopník* (The Pioneer), and the first edition of *Kovorobotník* (The Metalworker) was issued in April 1919.⁶² By March the OSČ had approximately 30,000 members in Slovakia.⁶³

The problem of Magyar and Polish workers was not resolved until 1920, when their unions also joined the OSČ. A Polish Trade Union Council was formed in Český Těšín and the independent organ *Związkowiec* (The Trade Unionist) began publication.⁶⁴ Around 20,000 Polish workers were thus incorporated into the OSČ.⁶⁵ The achievements with the centralist, Slovak, Hungarian and Polish unions were, however, tempered by the failure to unite the Czech and German-Bohemian organisations.

German unionists actively supported the attempts of their deputies to form an independent "German-Austria" in October 1918 to consist of four German-speaking areas in the Czech lands.⁶⁶ They thus adopted an "extremely nationalistic stance" towards the new republic. The Germans rejected the idea of organisational unity with the OSČ and the SDP, remaining an integral part of the Vienna Commission until the occupation of the German areas by Czech troops in January 1919, presented them with a *fait accompli*. In April 1919 a provincial conference of German Social Democratic unions convened in Teplice, which decided to establish independent German unions and a provisional Trade Union Commission for the Czech lands. This was welcomed by German unionists in Moravia and Silesia, and in July a central union organisation was founded, known from 1920 as the *Gewerkschaftsbund* with headquarters in Liberec. In September 1919, the German SDP followed suit and became an independent party based in Teplice.

Despite this, the OSČ leadership was eager to conclude an agreement with the Germans. After an exchange of letters and ideas, a joint meeting took place on 25 September 1919. The Czech representatives proposed a direct merger, while guaranteeing "broad autonomy" for German unions and the publication of German-language journals. The proposal for unification was rejected by the Germans, who demanded equal rights with the OSČ, although a smaller organisation.⁶⁷ They were more interested in narrower mutual cooperation. One concrete expression of this was the "miners' coalition," whereby the OSČ, ČOD and German miners' unions formed an alliance in March 1920 with the aim of presenting a united front to the employers.⁶⁸ Broader agreement proved more difficult in

spite of the aid of an observer from the Amsterdam-based International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU).⁶⁹ Independent Czech and German Social Democratic unions existed until 1927, when a merger was finally concluded.

By 1920 the OSČ was a multi-national organisation, comprising Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Polish workers. Its leaders had been successful in unifying these different nationalities, even though the German and National Socialist unions remained independent. Numerous other organisations came into existence acting as direct or indirect rivals to the larger socialist unions. The most important of these were the Christian Social unions (72,544 members in 1921), the Czechoslovak Union of Clerical Workers (97,058), the National Trade Union Association, the so-called "yellow" unions, affiliated to the right-wing National Democratic Party (15,000), and various white-collar unions which had no central organisational framework (320,567).⁷⁰

The failure to achieve total unification was alleviated by a massive post-war growth in union membership. The OSČ grew from 42,644 members in 1917 to 161,247 in 1918 to 727,055 in 1919 and to a post-war record of 822,561 in 1920, thus becoming by far the strongest union in Czechoslovakia.⁷¹ Of this 1920 figure, 416,365 members were employed in Bohemia (50.6 percent), 207,644 in Moravia (25.3 percent), 55,226 in Silesia (6.7 percent), 143,181 in Slovakia (17.4 percent), and a mere 145 in Ruthenia (0.01 percent). The OSČ was clearly based in the Czech lands, where industrial development was more advanced than in Slovakia. It was predominantly a blue-collar organisation, including both industrial and agricultural workers. Indeed, in 1919 the Union of Agricultural Workers was the single largest union with 179,650 members. The following year, because of a drop in membership, it was superseded by the Union of Metalworkers (146,701), and this union remained the largest throughout the 1920s. The next biggest unions in 1920 were the miners (84,895), the chemical workers (84,752), the railwaymen (66,598), and the textile workers (64,335). The percentage of female workers was relatively high, reaching a peak of 194,665 (26.8 percent) in 1919.⁷²

The membership of the ČOD and *Gewerkschaftsbund* likewise increased rapidly in the years 1918 to 1921, although never approaching OSČ figures. The ČOD had 91,390 members in 1918, rising to 192,665

in 1919, 249,648 in 1920 and 311,917 in 1921. Relatively, it organised more white-collar workers than the OSČ, but its largest unions in 1921 were similar to those of its great rivals: railway workers (56,540), metalworkers (31,843), textile workers (30,500) and agricultural workers (23,986).⁷³ The *Gewerkschaftsbund* grew significantly from 299,091 members in 1919 to 403,211 in 1920, although it decreased to 372,027 in 1921. It organised as much as 75 percent of unionised German labourers and by 1921 some of its unions were among the strongest in Czechoslovakia: the textile union (90,878), metalworkers (39,209), and the miners (37,582).⁷⁴ In total, the percentage of unionised workers in the years 1919 to 1921 remained approximately 50 percent, one of the highest in Europe.⁷⁵

The reasons for this enormous increase in membership are manifold. One contemporary observer claimed that the fundamental reason was the "...exceptional dissemination of socialist science among employees..." The same author also gave three further explanations; namely, the foundation of new industrial branches and the expansion of existing ones before and during the war, the lifting of restrictions on agricultural and state employees, and reduced resistance on the part of the employers to trade unionism.⁷⁶ The ideas of the Russian Revolution, although poorly understood, also aroused a sympathetic response among many Czech workers. The General Secretary of the OSČ, Rudolf Tayerle, himself no friend of the Bolsheviks, recognised this. He wrote in 1922 that the socialist developments in Russia acted as a spur to the masses, who began to believe that the basis of the world could be changed "at a stroke."⁷⁷ Perhaps more importantly, the uncertain political, economic and social conditions in the years 1918 to 1920 called forth a strong need for protective organisation. Unions were successful in negotiating wage increases, and this must have had a profound influence on previously non-organised workers. Unions had also proved themselves capable of achieving gains in social welfare and labour legislation.⁷⁸ In this way they became accepted organs of public life. The trade unions were to play an important role in creating a socially and economically more equitable society, and hence thousands of workers flocked to join them.

The Roots of the Split

The roots of the split in the OSČ in the years 1919-1920 are closely linked to the prevailing economic and social conditions. As described above, the Czechoslovak economy was in a bad state throughout 1919, food shortages were rife, and black-marketeering, inflation, unemployment, a lack of decent housing and the failures to carry out socialisation of the main industries caused resentment among broad strata of the population.⁷⁹ The last issue was of particular relevance to the trade union movement and was to be one of the first stumbling blocks between left and right.

The OSČ leadership throughout 1919 and 1920 professed its eagerness to introduce socialisation and the expropriation of the great estates. At a plenary meeting of the OSČ in July 1919, Tayerle proposed that coal and ore mines, ironworks and railways should be nationalised (*znárodněny*), and a law on the expropriation of the great estates be introduced as soon as possible. Furthermore, "as a transition to socialisation" it was recommended that in all other industrial and commercial enterprises, employees should have the right to cooperate with management on the engaging and dismissal of workers and to control working conditions.⁸⁰ This plan was later expanded in May 1920, but as time passed it became increasingly obvious that the OSČ was powerless to implement it.⁸¹ The socialisation of heavy industry aroused the opposition of the SDP coalition partners, forestalling any chance of progress. By 1922, Tayerle came under severe attack from the left for failing to fulfill OSČ promises and for making concessions to the bourgeoisie.⁸² Such criticism was inevitably since several high-ranking OSČ officials, like Tayerle, Hampl, Brodecký, Bohumil Jakubka, Robert Klein and Albín Chalupa, as parliamentary deputies of the SDP, became identified with the "compromising" policies of the Tusar government.⁸³

The lack of progress on socialisation prompted militant miners and metalworkers in the region around Kladno to form workers' councils, based on the Soviet model. Despite a broad propaganda campaign launched by the radical left, the councils remained largely confined to Kladno, although other areas were affected.⁸⁴ Indeed, the formation of these councils caused the first concrete signs of disagreement between the left and the OSČ leaders. An OSČ plenary meeting on 13 June 1919, rejected

calls for the establishment of workers' councils, declaring that, "we consider trade union organisations and factory bodies of shop-stewards sufficient for the defence of workers' interests and the socialisation of production." Workers' councils were "clearly and definitely unnecessary," especially as they were advocated "mainly for political reasons," and would undermine the traditional faith of the working class in union organisations. The same meeting also opposed "...any introduction of political disputes into trade unions," and called for a "...stand against exaggerated demands dictated by political tactics." The aim of the OSČ was "...to consolidate relations in the republic..."⁸⁵

Hence by June 1919 one can detect a fear of political disruption in trade union organisations. The demands of the left, centred on socialisation and workers' councils, were viewed by the OSČ leaders as interference in their sphere of competence.⁸⁶ However, it would be wrong to portray the nascent left opposition as an organised, revolutionary force in 1919. Even in its base, the area around Kladno, trade union agitation was often neglected, since political developments within the SDP were regarded as more important. As one leading Czech labour historian has noted,

in practice...the influence of the left in trade unions was by no means outstandingly asserted. Adherents of the left...on the whole submitted to the line of the OSČ leadership.⁸⁷

The creation of the Marxist Left in the SDP in late 1919 helped to crystallise the opposition's attitude to the OSČ leadership. District conferences in Brno and Třebíč in January 1920 criticised the coalition policy of the Social Democratic ministers.⁸⁸ More significantly, the left-wing press began to dedicate more attention to the trade union question, urging "uncompromising socialism" and the "disentanglement" of workers from their reformist leaders.⁸⁹

The gradual intensification of leftist activity was discussed at a meeting of OSČ secretaries on 11 May 1920. Several speakers complained of the confused situation in the trade union movement and emphasised the need for unity. The general atmosphere of the meeting conveyed not only the fear of employer attacks on the achievements gained since October 1918, but also distinct concern over the possibility of disunity within

OSČ ranks, Šida from Moravská Ostrava warned that, "if the present mood grows any stronger we will not have the strength to avoid a catastrophe." Vácha, a secretary from Pardubice, said that "Bolsheviks can do us great harm and can successfully poison our developing movement." The OSČ General Secretary, Tayerle, expressed his attitude towards the left by stating that workers' councils were a negation of all OSČ activity, adding that,

we must stand firmly behind our newly created state and afford our republic the opportunity to arrange and consolidate its affairs properly, both economically and politically . . . We must continue our work in trade union organisations on the principles which we have defended up till now . . .

Tayerle then declared that the OSČ should be "... independent in its relations with political parties."⁹⁰

This was a significant remark, for it was at this time that the OSČ leadership devised the policy of political neutrality. The ideological schism in the SDP was quite apparent and would almost certainly spread to the unions. The union leaders were in a precarious situation. On the one hand, they had to retain credibility in the eyes of the membership by placating popular demands for socialisation and social and economic improvements. This entailed emphasising their neutrality vis à vis the compromised SDP rightists. On the other, they had to defend the traditional principles of gradualism and compromise, and in addition felt obliged to protect the new Czechoslovak Republic, thus antagonising the emerging left. The OSČ leaders decided that the best way of maintaining their authority and of preventing a split was the policy of political neutrality. It was basically a centrist position, standing between the two poles of the SDP right and the Marxist Left, and adopting a neutral stance towards ideological disputes.

A fine example of this vacillating position was provided at a board of representatives meeting in September 1920. The resolution stated that Czechoslovak trade unions "... have never lost sight of their international aim, the expropriation of the private means of production and the socialisation of this production." However, this goal was effectively pushed into the distant future by stressing the need for long-term education of

trade union members. Likewise, the OSČ "...should not reject important social reforms which strengthen workers' attempts towards economic democracy." The resolution concluded with the words, "we regard economic disruption as harmful to the working class."⁹¹ In the leadership's terms, this dual policy appeared quite logical, but ultimately it could not satisfy the left, which was on the verge of capturing the majority of delegates at the thirteenth SDP congress.

As we have mentioned, the OSČ officially adopted a neutral position towards the split in the SDP. This was spelt out at a Central Trade Union Council conference on 17 September 1920. The representatives announced that,

the trade union movement has always been organisationally independent. It is especially necessary to emphasise this independence today, when the dangers threatening the unity of the Social Democratic Party are also becoming a danger to the unity of the trade union movement. . . . Therefore the Central Council of the OSČ highly recommends that trade union shop-stewards, in their capacity, should not take part in political party meetings.⁹²

The OSČ executive made it quite evident that political disputes should not be carried over into union organisations. For them political neutrality offered the only practical means of preserving unity.

In the autumn of 1920 the left too appeared willing to accept neutrality, at least in theory. A joint meeting of five SDP rightists, six leftists and seven OSČ representatives on 12 October declared, "both sides agree that trade union organisations should not be drawn into the dispute. . . ." Agitation against the Amsterdam Trade Union International constituted an infringement of this principle, although the leftists urged rather vaguely that "enlarged shop-steward councils" should decide on the question of International affiliation. Moreover, union meetings should not become forums for controversial issues, and journals were to refrain from one-sided reports and propagate the concept of trade union unity.⁹³ Despite the fact that in November and December 1920 the organ of the Marxist Left, *Rudé právo* (Red Right), adhered to these instructions, in the long run the left was less dedicated to the idea of union neutrality than the OSČ board.⁹⁴

This became abundantly obvious after the failure of the General Strike in December 1920. The Marxist Left proclaimed the strike in protest against the police occupation of the Social Democratic Party headquarters, the *Lidový dům* (People's House). Left and right factions in the party had been haggling over ownership of the building since September. The rightists won the legal battle and simply called in the gendarmerie to expel leftists from the premises. The OSČ executive immediately appealed for a peaceful solution to the dispute and for renewed non-partisanship among trade unionists. To this end, the union leadership adopted a centrist position, suggesting mediation talks between the two wings of the SDP. The left at first rejected this proposal, arguing that their demands, which included the resignation of Jan Černý's "government of officials," workers' control over production and a thirty percent wage increase, should be the basis of any negotiations. By 12 December, two days after the strike began, the left had retreated and three-way discussions were held between the OSČ Central Council and representatives of the warring factions. No agreement was forthcoming, whereupon the OSČ reiterated its call for arbitration and demanded an end to violence and the safeguarding of the freedom of press and assembly. In an attempt to woo the left the Central Council promised to do everything in its power to fulfill social demands, in particular the socialisation of the mines. Since this could best be achieved in a stable economy, the Council appealed for an end to the strike.⁹⁵ Thus, to the chagrin of the left, the OSČ position of neutrality assisted the right in that the strike never received official recognition, deterring many members from participating. In fact, the trade union movement as a whole, not excepting left-oriented organisations, contributed little or nothing to the strike, a major reason for its failure.

The minor role played by the unions became a source of friction between the political leadership of the Marxist Left and revolutionary trade unionists. The Union of Chemical Workers, led by Josef Hais, a lifelong unionist and supporter of "non-compromising socialism," printed an unusually frank commentary in its organ, *Dělník* (The Worker). According to the journal, the Marxist Left had acted on its own initiative in calling the strike "without the agreement of the most important bodies, e.g. the trade unions" Furthermore, the SDP left:

. . . has hitherto believed that the political party is the principal factor, and that the unions must merely listen. Now it has been

shown that without the unions the party means nothing and that the unions have the first and main say. They cannot be regarded as secondary bodies.⁹⁶

This statement was highly significant in three ways. First, it lent weight to the idea that the Marxist Left leaders had failed to produce a coherent programme for work in the union movement, and had even adopted a condescending attitude towards the unions. Secondly, it illustrated the lack of contact between party and trade union leftists, and thirdly, Hais revealed his extreme reluctance to submit to party domination in union affairs. This conviction was to cause great acrimony between the Red Unions and the Communist Party later in the 1920s.

The conflict of interests between the political and trade union branches of the revolutionary opposition, which revolved around the former's neglect of trade union work, only gradually healed after the General Strike. The most urgent task in early 1921 was political: the creation of a unified Communist Party, as decreed by the Communist International (Comintern). Nevertheless, the radical press did begin to pay more attention to the trade union problem, agitating for revolutionary change in existing unions. The leftist journal, *Sociální demokrat*, put the issue in stark terms: "either Red Unions or Tayerle's and Hampl's. Either Moscow or Amsterdam." Unity should be maintained, but unions were to become "instruments of a decisive class struggle . . ."⁹⁷ One young militant, Rudolf Hájek, called for a purge of OSČ leaders similar to that undertaken in the SDP. He identified the trade union bureaucracy as the main target.⁹⁸ Thus, by early 1921 the choice was becoming clearer. Indeed, Tayerle had already come to the same conclusion as *Sociální demokrat*, albeit from a different angle. He wrote in the official OSČ organ that every member must decide once and for all to be either a Social Democrat or a Communist, to be for the road of political democracy or the dictatorship of the proletariat.⁹⁹

Not everyone saw it in such black and white terms. The "centrists," who were based in the Railway Workers' Union led by Vilém Brodecký, had some important adherents, including Škatula, Václav Krňanský, an editor of *Rudé právo*, Josef Teska, chairman of the Woodworkers' Union, and V. Lev, also an editor of the KSČ daily. They were particularly strong in the Mladá Boleslav area, north east of Prague, and had

supporters in the capital, Brno, Pardubice and České Budějovice. They doubted the wisdom of joining the Comintern, and yet opposed the coalition policy of the SDP.¹⁰⁰ Although some centrists were close to leftist circles their ideas were rejected by the more radical unionists, and from February and March 1921 onwards there were distinct indications that the revolutionary opposition was stepping up its campaign.

The first union to display pro-communist leanings was the Union of Agricultural and Forestry Workers at its congress in early March. The demand for land and several wage disputes in 1920 had radicalised many union members, and the leftists on the board were able to secure a majority at the congress. According to *Sociální demokrat* the congress firmly rejected "social patriot opportunism" and the theory of trade union neutrality, and resolutely backed the concept of a "non-compromising class struggle."¹⁰¹ The dispossessed right, led by Albín Chalupa, was accused of trying to split the union in opposition to the new radical leaders, Václav Bolen and Martin Šváb.¹⁰² Similar events took place in the Union of Chemical Workers, another leftist stronghold. In February 1921 rightists under Karel Piták attempted to form a splinter union, as they regarded the Hais leadership as "communist" and opposed its management of union finances and tactics. In reply, Hais appealed for unity and stressed his union's loyalty to the OSČ. However, he did not hesitate to expel Piták for addressing the thirteenth SDP (right) congress in December 1920.¹⁰⁴

The triumph of the left at the Agricultural workers' congress represented an important advance and provided "... an impulse for the greater activation of the revolutionary opposition in other OSČ unions."¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, the congress, together with events in the Chemical Union, revealed certain differences of opinion between the OSČ and SDP leaders. The former, continuing their "centrist" line, decisively opposed the efforts of "... several [rightist] members of the Chemical, Building and Brickworkers' Union to found an independent organisation, the Union of Ancillary Building Workers...", as this step signified a weakening of the trade union movement.¹⁰⁶ The OSČ was evidently concerned about the risk to unity, since Piták's actions could have served as a precedent for other disillusioned rightists.

In direct contrast, *Právo lidu* attacked the "communist inspired" chemical and agricultural workers' unions, and warned against "... any

communist or anarchist putsch," which would bring about the break-up of the union movement. The same article went on to say that the most dangerous threat to union principles was the ideas of Russian Communism as embodied in the Third International. Its adherents wanted to split trade unions in order to implement revolutionary tactics, which,

in our conditions must lead to the complete defeat of the working class and could even bring about the loss of post-war democratic achievements.¹⁰⁷

The OSČ Central Council roundly rejected this claim, and on 1 April stated that both unions remained within the OSČ and as such were members of the Amsterdam International.¹⁰⁸

The neutral position of the OSČ was further defined in the spring of 1921, when the Central Council issued a concrete programme for the observance of trade union neutrality in political disputes. The main points declared that no OSČ secretary could attend or address any political meeting or conference without the prior approval of the Central Council. Moreover, it was to be considered a breach of discipline if a representative of a political party holding sectarian views was invited to speak at a union meeting.¹⁰⁹ The thrust of this policy was designed to prevent communists from engaging in direct political agitation within union branches. Such agitation, according to Tayerle, "...hurled incendiary torches into the trade union movement..." in the hope of breaking its unity "...in a whirl of political struggles under the slogan of worker liberation." Tayerle emphasised the difference between Social Democrats and Communists thus:

Social Democracy, though it allows for cooperation with trade union organisations in common questions concerning the workers, recognises their independence, whilst the communist programme makes union organisations direct instruments of the political party.

Unions should not "...become puppets of political parties."¹¹⁰ This idea was a recurrent theme in Tayerle's efforts to isolate and discredit communist unionists and to gain mass support for the OSČ line. The overall theory of trade union neutrality in political affairs was, however, an

unrealistic proposition for it was only a matter of time before the disputes in the SDP found expression in the OSČ. To this extent, Tayerle's policy was doomed to failure, as events were to prove.

Just as the OSČ was defining its position, so the militant left was beginning to crystallise its attitudes to the trade unions as essential instruments of class struggle working for social revolution. Therefore, they should be "revolutionised in the communist spirit." Hais attacked the union leaders as "betrayers" of the working class, and called for an "un-compromising, class road to socialism."¹¹¹ Yet even as late as May 1921, the left was still confused and divided on the question of trade union tactics. The Founding Congress of the KSČ, held between 14 and 16 May, failed to give detailed directives and indeed hardly discussed the problem. Šmeral in his long address merely said, "do not split the unions, but penetrate them with non-compromising ideas."¹¹² Immediately following the congress two separate guidelines were published designed to define more clearly communist union activity. The first, written by Julius Choráz entitled "*The Relationship of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia to the Trade Union Movement*," was published in three issues of *Rudé právo* in mid June. The second by Karel Votava appeared in the form of an Open Letter, "*An Epistle to Trade Unionised Workers*."

Choráz stated that points nine and ten of the Comintern's "Twenty-one Conditions on Entry" were binding for the KSČ.¹¹³ The most urgent aims of the party in the union movement were to "acquire" organisations for the ideas of communism; to establish "nuclei," subordinated to the KSČ, in all union bodies; to repudiate the Amsterdam International; to join the Comintern and support the newly created Red International of Labour Unions; and to control strictly the tendency of the trade union bureaucracy toward "opportunism."¹¹⁴ Choráz's article attempted, somewhat belatedly and simplistically, to end the long-standing nebulous attitude of the left to the unions by clarifying the party's professed goals: to capture OSČ unions by systematic agitation and the formation of party cells.

Votava's pamphlet strongly reiterated this theme. "The task of trade union organisations is to lead a systematic struggle against capitalist social organisations" on the basis of revolutionary, proletarian ideas. "The real meaning of trade unionism does not consist in the enforcement of minor advantages for the working class," and hence there must

be a "crystallisation process" within the unions, as there had been in the political movement. "Those forces which activated conflicts in the political arena are calling for a sharp struggle in the trade union movement," to be realised "the sooner, the better."

However, in highly contradictory style Votava maintained that "... it is necessary to prevent splits and to utilise all levers to preserve unity..." In reply to Tayerle's theory of neutrality, the document stated, "the trade union movement has never been neutral. It has always been a component of the former revolutionary social democracy..." and as such should participate in the "revolutionary struggle of the proletariat for political power." Since the "reformists" would resist, the blame for any future splits could be laid at their door. The author concluded by attacking the Amsterdam International, labelling it an "ill-disciplined and disunited" body led by a bureaucratic caste of officials.¹¹⁵

Despite the continuing lack of a detailed, coherent plan in the spring of 1921, the left did register several isolated successes. In April, the Vysočany Trade Union Council expressed opposition to the theory of union neutrality, although rather contradictorily voted against bringing political conflicts into the union arena.¹¹⁶ The demand for a Greater Prague Trade Union Council raised at this meeting was discussed at a conference of District Councils on 22 May 1921, at which it was decided to create a council as "the leader of the revolutionary class-conscious workers of all Prague unions."¹¹⁷ The OSČ predictably condemned this move, describing the new body as "a mere appendage of the party" designed to be a direct rival to the OSČ councils already in existence.¹¹⁸ In April, the Smíchov council called on Tayerle, Hampl and Jakubka to resign from the SDP club of deputies, and designated the concept of "neutrality" a pretext for Tayerle's "one-man rule."¹¹⁹ After the split in the Social Democratic Party in September 1920, all three had joined the right-wing club inevitably giving rise to doubts about the sincerity of Tayerle's "neutrality."¹²⁰ Thus the left made progress in certain working class districts of Prague, but the right remained in overall control of the higher union organs in the capital.¹²¹

Signs of militant activity also became evident elsewhere. In April a pro-Comintern trade union council was formed in Bratislava, and in July Tayerle mentioned reports from Roudnice in northern Bohemia that as a result of communist agitation some groups had refused to pay

obligatory union dues to the local council. In the same month the OSČ board of representatives noted the fact that district councils in Brno, Přerov and Klatovy had issued resolutions criticising official OSČ policy, though no details were provided.¹²² The month of July also saw important developments outside Czechoslovakia.

"Moscow or Amsterdam?"

The Communist International, or Comintern, had been founded in Moscow in March 1919 as a rival world organisation to the Socialist Second International. For the first two years of its existence, the Comintern adopted a radical approach to the socialist dominated trade union movement in Europe. A directive published by the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) in April 1920 called for the establishment of a new trade union movement in opposition to the socialist International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) based in Amsterdam. The decree stated that "...all honest unions should break with the yellow Amsterdam Trade Union International." At the second Comintern congress in July 1920 Karl Radek went a stage further, saying,

we go into unions in order to overthrow the bureaucracy and if necessary to split the unions We shall try to turn unions into fighting organisations, but if the resistance of the bureaucracy should be stronger than we assume, we shall not hesitate to destroy them

Lenin himself was adamant that one must:

. . . in case of necessity, resort to every kind of trick, cunning, illegal expedient, concealment, suppression of the truth, in order to penetrate into the trade unions, to remain in them, to conduct in them, at whatever cost, communist work.

However, in typically ambiguous style, the congress trade union resolution declared that,

. . . .all artificial attempts to create separate trade unions, unless compelled thereto . . . by extraordinary acts of violence on the

part of the trade union bureaucracy . . . are extremely dangerous for the communist movement.¹²³

Hence, in 1920 Comintern on the one hand did not discount the possibility of splits, and yet on the other opposed the creation of separate trade unions. The recipients of such contradictory advice can be excused a certain degree of confusion, and indeed *Rudé právo* bemoaned the fact that the ECCI was not united on the trade union question.¹²⁴

The third Comintern congress in July 1921 and particularly the creation of the Red International of Labour Unions, or Profintern, held "fundamental significance" for the ideological crystallisation of the revolutionary opposition in the Czech trade union movement.¹²⁵ At the time little was written about the formation of the Profintern, bar a few short articles in *Rudé právo* and *Dělník*,¹²⁶ but it soon began to exert influence. The principal significance of the Profintern lay in the fact that opposition groups in capitalist countries were now able to focus their campaigns around the question "Moscow or Amsterdam?," which is precisely what occurred in Czechoslovakia. Once the Profintern had been established, communists had a concrete goal to attain, could pressurise union leaders and could initiate a propaganda offensive in the press.

The Profintern programme is worth discussing as it clearly outlined the basic differences between the communist and social democratic approach to trade union activity. The founding congress of the organisation (3-19 July 1921) declared that the main aim of the trade union movement was the definitive elimination of the capitalist system of exploitation of man by man, and its replacement by a socialist system based on the collective ownership of production. This was to be achieved by a joint struggle on both the political and economic fronts led by the Communist Party. The reformist notion of trade union neutrality in the political struggle was rejected. The congress recognised, however, that the immediate battleground was the economic demands of the workers in the factories, and here the differences were most pronounced. Whereas the reformists strove to resolve conflicts with employers by negotiation, compromise and agreement, and regarded the strike as an extreme, last-ditch measure, the revolutionary unionists, while not *a priori* rejecting negotiation, considered direct, organised worker action, such as strikes, demonstrations, boycotts and occupations of factories, as the basis of their

tactics. "Leftist adventurism," defined as the calling of conflicts in which the workers were condemned to defeat in advance, was categorically repudiated.

Organisationally, the Profintern demanded the transition from craft unions to unions according to industrial branches on the principle "one industry—one union, one factory—one union organisation." This would allow the concentration of workers in large, united unions, which would be better able to defend their interests. On the international front, revolutionary trade unions were instructed to wage a "consistent struggle" against the reformist idea of class cooperation, as espoused by the Amsterdam International. Therefore, all links with this "yellow" organisation were to be broken. The duty of adherents was to capture reformist unions as a whole for revolutionary principles and to transfer them to the Profintern. Only if revolutionaries were expelled and not readmitted by the reformists were parallel communist unions to be created, and then purely as a temporary solution.¹²⁷ Those syndicalists and sectarians who urged an immediate split were thus defeated at the congress.

The Comintern issued a thesis on the formation of the new International, which stated that in Czechoslovakia,

...our party has behind it a majority of the working class, but the trade union movement for the most part continues to be in the hands of the social patriots and centrists... This is a result of the non-classconsciousness and incorrect organisation of the revolutionary members of trade unions. The party must do everything... to subordinate the entire movement in the unions to communist leadership.¹²⁸

According to a Profintern resolution, the task of Czechoslovak communists was to:

...wrest the general Trade Union Centre... from the Amsterdam organisation within the shortest possible time. We can recommend... that within three months... the question of Moscow or Amsterdam should be voted on by every union in every country.¹²⁹

The Comintern correctly recognised that the Social Democrats remained largely in control of the Czech trade union movement. As noted above,

the revolutionary opposition was influential in the Agricultural Workers' Union and the Union of Chemical Workers. In addition, communists were powerful on the boards of the Builders' and Woodworkers' unions, where Karel Tetenka and Josef Teska were the respective leaders. Sections of several other unions were sympathetic to the communist cause, including members of the massive Union of Metalworkers, generally seen as a right-wing bastion under Antonín Hampl,¹³⁰ the Union of Miners, the Textile Workers' union, and a few smaller organisations, such as the Transport Workers, Shoemakers, Glassworkers and Leatherworkers. Only Josef Hais and Josef Teska regularly put forward opposition viewpoints on the OSČ Central Council. The left was reasonably strong on several regional and district trade union councils, notably Kladno, Brno, Slaný, Třebíč and Hodonín among others.

The overall tactic of the KSČ in the second half of 1921, as decreed by the Profintern, was to force an OSČ congress on the question of "Moscow or Amsterdam?" As early as March, *Rudé právo* had demanded an all-trade union congress,¹³¹ and the call became more vociferous after the formation of the Red International examples being the Vršovice trade union council conference in mid-August, followed by the Vinohrady council a few days later.¹³² The left opposition was bolstered also by a series of triumphs at district and regional conferences. The first of these came in July in Ostrava where communists won 75 percent of the seats on the new district trade union council.¹³³ Soon after, an all-trade union conference in Jihlava passed a resolution by forty-five to five votes stating, "our place is among the ranks of the international proletariat under the banner of the Moscow Red International."¹³⁴

In early September, the congress of the Builders' union sharply criticised the OSČ leadership "for political reasons."¹³⁵ The resolution adopted by the congress asserted that "... the principles laid down by the Moscow Trade Union International (are) ... the only correct means of carrying out a struggle against the holders of economic power."¹³⁶ However, Karel Tetenka, the union president, was loath to split the OSČ unilaterally, as only an all-trade union congress had competence to decide on international membership. Hence, no firm decision was taken on whether to join the Profintern, although such proposals were submitted.¹³⁷ Later that month, at a Moravian regional trade union conference in Brno a vast majority of delegates, 458 to two, voted in favour of a

resolution supporting the methods of Moscow.¹³⁸ The OSČ journal, *Sjednocení* (Unification), claimed that the conference was attended only by delegates from Brno, a radical area, and that Olomouc and Ostrava had refused to participate. Furthermore, because of the "heavy influence" of the KSČ, there was no debate on the proposed resolutions.¹³⁹ Clearly one should be aware that the results of these conferences may not always truly reflect the opinions of the membership, and that the communists were not averse to utilising less than democratic methods in order to gain a majority. Nevertheless, the resolutions tend to suggest that the revolutionary opposition did enjoy strong support in certain areas and unions.

The press propaganda campaign was likewise accelerated in the autumn of 1921. The OSČ leaders were convinced that the communists were intent on splitting the trade unions. "The Communist Party is striving to gain control of the trade union movement and use it for its own party political purposes."¹⁴⁰ *Sjednocení* argued that communist papers like *Rudé právo* and the Brno daily *Rovnost* (Equality) were conducting attacks on union organisations and propagating the ideas of the Comintern among the workforce in direct opposition to the theory of union neutrality.¹⁴¹

Tayerle had previously written that communist agitation enjoyed most success among young workers aged between 18 and 24, students, and the "so-called" intelligentsia, writers and doctors.¹⁴² The OSČ Central Council even turned to Karl Marx in their offensive, using his words that "trade unions can never become dependent on a political group . . ." to rebuff the attempts of the KSČ to forge tight links between the party and the unions.¹⁴³

In its defence the KSČ forcibly denied that communists aimed to split the unions. Their aim was rather "... to achieve the unity of trade union organisations with the Communist Party." Without providing details of how it was to be done, *Rudé právo* wrote that "unions—including the Czechoslovak Trade Union Association (OSČ)—must join the Moscow Trade Union International."¹⁴⁴ The communists must have realised the possible consequences of their actions, but preferred to blame the union leadership for any future splits. "The social patriot rulers of the Trade Union Association intend to split the union movement," as Tusar had done in the SDP, under the guise of the "maintenance

of neutrality." The union bureaucracy wanted to "purge" communist members and expel them from the OSČ because the leaders were afraid of defeat at the forthcoming seventh congress.¹⁴⁵ The militant Václav Bolen asserted that the reformists were "... preparing a *general attack on communist trade unionists*..."¹⁴⁶ The fact that such expulsions did not take place before the congress tends to disprove these allegations.

On 8 September 1921 the Central Council reluctantly agreed to convene the seventh all-trade union congress for the end of January 1922.¹⁴⁷ This in itself marked a major success for the left, since the vote on the Moscow or Amsterdam question was by no means clear-cut. The decision was followed by four months of hectic activity. The revolutionary opposition was given a significant boost by the Unification Congress of the KSČ in late October and early November. The prominent German-Czech communist, Karel Kreibich, wrote a year later that "only after the Communist Party was united did real work begin for the winning over of the trade unions..." As the task of uniting the party had been more important, "work in the trade unions... was neglected." As a result "... there was lacking a clear understanding of Communist duty within the trade union movement," and an "... absence of unity and coordination in all activities."¹⁴⁸ There is no doubt more than a grain of truth in Kreibich's analysis, but one finds it hard to accept that communists totally neglected trade union work before November 1921. Much evidence has been provided to the contrary, although in terms of a coherent, concrete party plan, Kreibich is probably correct. The unification of the disparate elements of the KSČ did increase the capacity of the communists to organise a concerted onslaught for victory at the seventh OSČ congress, but internal divisions seriously weakened their campaign.

Numerous accusations and counter-accusations marred the build-up to the all-important congress. *Rudé právo* claimed that of the 67 delegates from the Union of Metalworkers, 33 were to be nominated by the union board and the remaining 34 elected by the membership would be "fixed" in favour of right-wingers.¹⁴⁹ Similarly, the Union of Miners was to send its entire board to the congress, thereby turning it into a gathering of "right-wing secretaries."¹⁵⁰ One Czech historian has quoted an article by František Modráček, the extreme rightist Social Democrat, in which he contended that only 200 of the 602 delegates were properly elected, the rest being appointed by union leaders.¹⁵¹

The accusation of nominating delegates was not specifically denied by OSČ officials. An article by Beránek stated that "it is not true that the 'appointment' of delegates was done to weaken the position of the Communist Party," since in some unions, even in those controlled by the left, it proved impossible to carry out elections.¹⁵² This was a tacit acceptance that appointments *did* take place, but on both sides of the ideological divide. *Právo lidu*, as usual, far exceeded the OSČ press in its accusations. It claimed that the communist-controlled Woodworkers' Union, led by Josef Teska and Jaroslav Handlíř, had "fixed" voting regions in order to ensure victory for communist groups. Hence, "dissatisfaction with the communist leadership . . . is growing."¹⁵³ Furthermore, the SDP daily asserted that a pro-Amsterdam delegate, Frydrych, had been elected for the Liberec district, but union leaders decided to appoint his opponent, the communist Adam, in his stead.¹⁵⁴ *Právo lidu* saw this manipulation as part of a general KSČ plan to gain control of the trade union central leadership by inciting members with radical phraseology and by relying on communist cells to infiltrate local union branches.¹⁵⁵

Personalised attacks also became a feature of the propaganda campaign. The OSČ and particularly the SDP press carried several articles highly critical of communist trade unionists. Arno Hais, son of the leader of the Chemical Workers' Union, was branded a "paid agent of the Russian government."¹⁵⁶ His aim was to help the KSČ to eliminate OSČ secretaries and take over the trade union movement.¹⁵⁷ Ferdinand Nádvorník was described as "a dictator" of the Ostrava branch of the Chemical Union.¹⁵⁸ Finally, according to a report in *Rudé právo*, the Social Democratic press had attacked Josef Teska for allegedly spending 40,000 crowns on a union-sponsored trip to Russia, paid for by membership dues.¹⁵⁹ For its part, the communist press launched a series of attacks on OSČ leaders, especially Tayerle, Hampl, and Jakubka. The first, as a member of the SDP club of parliamentary deputies, was accused of voting for lower wages for state employees, although his job as leader of the OSČ was to defend their interests. His "neutrality" thus became "a capitulation" before the *diktat* of capital, "a betrayal of the workers' interests . . ." All three were also criticised for voting for the SDP right in September 1920.¹⁶⁰

However, the main problem for the communists was not so much the activities of the OSČ leaders, but a profound internal division at the

highest levels of the KSČ. The Narrow Executive was split on the question of trade union policy.¹⁶¹ On the one hand were the leftists, Václav Bolen, Bohumil Jílek, Václav Houser and Václav Štunc, and on the other Bohumír Šmeral, Karel Kreibich and Alois Neurath. The former, who had been elected at the Unification Congress in November, were suspicious of the new Comintern "united front" tactic, officially adopted in December, 1921. This stressed the necessity of work *within* reformist unions, whereas Bolen in particular was totally committed to splitting the OSČ and forming independent, revolutionary union organisations should the seventh congress vote in favour of Amsterdam.¹⁶² As one of the leaders of the Agricultural Workers' Union, Bolen had overseen the nonpayment of dues to the OSČ centre since November 1920.¹⁶³ According to *Právo lidu*, the amount owed was 313,000 crowns.¹⁶⁴ This radical stance seriously weakened the left for the OSČ leadership voted in November 1921 to ban the Agricultural Union from participation in the congress, reducing by 43 the left's delegation.¹⁶⁵

Bolen remained adamant and even threatened to resign as chairman of the union should the KSČ force him to pay the outstanding dues. His stubbornness caused strong reaction among members of the Commission of Communist Trade Unionists, a body formed in the autumn to coordinate links among leftist unions. The Commission described the agricultural workers' action as "a profound breach of communist discipline in the trade union field, bordering on anarchist sectarianism," a most serious charge. But owing to the composition of the Narrow Executive, Bolen survived. On 7 December, Josef Hais proposed that the union be obliged to pay the dues, but Jílek and the other leftists voted against the resolution "after a sharp exchange of views."¹⁶⁶

A tentative unity was finally restored in January 1922, when the 24-member Broad Executive Committee decisively endorsed the united front tactic. Šmeral, first and foremost, opposed splitting the OSČ and the Executive Committee statement reinforced his views:

... should the majority at the congress decide either for or against our opinions, we pronounce today that we shall remain in the Czechoslovak trade union organisation.

The party emphasised that in order to win over the majority of union

members for Profintern methods, revolutionary work was essential, but *within* OSČ unions.¹⁶⁷ The triumph of the centre-right in the KSČ reflected the Comintern position. The Bolen-Jílek group was six months behind the times, as one can see by the Profintern communiqué addressed to the OSČ congress.

The communiqué stressed that "... the break with Amsterdam must under no circumstances injure the unity of the trade union movement in your country." If the seventh congress voted for the I.F.T.U., "... the minority must stay in the unions, work there and, without any attempts at bringing about a split, prove by self-sacrifice and devotion..." the correctness of communist tactics.¹⁶⁸ Hence, Šmeral was more in line with Moscow's thinking than Bolen, a factor which undoubtedly swayed the Broad Executive Committee in his favour. Nevertheless, "unity" in the party came too late. The divisions in the KSČ leadership seriously hindered its campaign before the OSČ congress and were an important cause of its ultimate defeat. The lack of a united trade union policy, combined with personal animosities, must have severely restricted communist activity in the provinces, and was an example of the non-homogeneous nature of the infant KSČ.

The central question of why and how communists gained a foothold in the OSČ in the years 1919-1921 has deliberately been left to last. It has already been emphasised that the poor economic situation, characterised by food shortages, black-marketeering, inflation and unemployment, caused widespread resentment. This in turn was reflected in the radicalisation of some trade union leaders and certain sections of the working class, most notably lower paid workers in agriculture and in the chemical, building, textile and timber industries. The more militant among them looked to the ideas of Bolshevism as a rapid answer to economic and social ills, and advocated the formation of workers' councils in response to the failure of the SDP-led coalition government to introduce the socialisation of industry. On the political field, the rise of the Marxist Left and the ideological schism in the Social Democratic Party was bound to have as a corollary a left-wing movement in the trade unions, albeit at first an ill-organised and non-homogeneous group of discontents.

The defeat of the General Strike in December 1920 was the signal for an attack by the employers on the social achievements and higher wages won by the working class since October 1918. This onslaught

proved to be crucial in arousing a left-wing orientation among many union members, taking them beyond the gradualist policies of the OSČ leaders.

The OSČ congress report from 1922 noted the "aggression" of the employers after the General Strike, which caused a series of strikes, especially in the building and metal industries, and even among bank officials. Thousands of workers were involved in lock-outs, not for demanding higher wages, but for resisting cuts.¹⁶⁹ In the glass industry, employers attempted to annul collective agreements, while in agriculture they aimed to reverse the law on the eight-hour working day with the backing of the Ministry of Agriculture.¹⁷⁰ As late as July 1921 the builders' organ, *Stavebník* (The Builder) claimed that "no employer respects" the law on the eight-hour day, simply because it was common knowledge that he would not be prosecuted for his transgression. Indeed, one factory in Moravia worked sixteen hours daily.¹⁷¹

Moreover, there was widespread victimisation of workers after the strike. The OSČ report expressed concern that the authorities frequently prosecuted innocent workers and even whole trade union committees. The imprisonment of trade union functionaries was criticised and union leaders, such as Josef Hais, demanded resolute intervention on their behalf and their early release.¹⁷² Several hundred union officials were sacked and arrested, and participants in the strike were refused when they later applied for work.¹⁷³ Unemployment benefit was deemed inadequate, a 100 percent increase being demanded by the OSČ board in April 1921.¹⁷⁴ The SDP (right) daily in the Kladno region, *Dělnické listy* (The Workers' Paper), summed up the situation by saying, "people have every reason to be discontented," and went on to blame the government for not tackling effectively the problems of profiteering, inflation and unemployment. At the same time, the paper launched a broadside against the "communist putsch" in December, and attacked the left's activity in trade unions, which merely broke the worker's faith in their leaders. Such action would ultimately lead to the demise of trade unionism.¹⁷⁵ For a while, however, the OSČ executive and the Communist Party seemed united in their appraisal of the post-strike events. An OSČ board meeting on 21 December stated that the employers were striving to smash trade union unity and to deprive workers of their economic and social gains.¹⁷⁶ Similarly, *Rudé právo* claimed that the employers were aiming to lower wages and break union unity.¹⁷⁷

In reality, such "unity" was illusory. The left-wing press soon began a campaign for more immediate and radical solutions to the worsening economic and social climate. Attacks on the OSČ leaders' moderation and failure to fulfill promises were commonplace. One such promise was the insistence on reducing the price of essential goods and foodstuffs, which never materialised, according to the KSC daily.¹⁷⁸ Another area of major conflict was the so-called "Law on Terror" of August 1921. The left saw it as "... a joint undertaking of the reformists and bourgeoisie."¹⁷⁹ It was, they asserted, aimed not only at communists, but trade unionists in general, since strike-breakers could appeal to the law for protection.¹⁸⁰ The OSČ leadership while regretting certain passages in the law, accepted it.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, some SDP parliamentary deputies even voted for it in the National Assembly, most likely believing that it would curb communist excesses in the unions.¹⁸² The controversial law did little but exacerbate the gulf between left and right.

The Chemical Workers' organ, *Dělník*, was adamant on the need for change:

it is clear that the old methods of the trade union leadership no longer conform to the present demands of the working masses and of individual unions. . . .

A reorganisation of the entire OSČ leadership was necessary.¹⁸³ The head of the union, Josef Hais, wrote that the "reformist betrayers" of the workers helped the bourgeoisie by their theory of class understanding and acceptance of the economic order.¹⁸⁴ New, "non-compromising" tactics were required to combat the attacks of the employers, since the OSČ did not act quickly enough in defence of workers' interests.¹⁸⁵ These tactics, however, were not clearly defined, which tended to weaken the influence of the left on a Czech working class not given to revolutionary bravado. Having said this, it remains a fact that the poor economic and social conditions in the period 1919 to 1921, coupled with an increasing propaganda campaign in the communist press, radicalised a significant minority of trade unionists. The negative response on the part of many workers to OSČ policies did not necessarily signify a positive stance towards the KSC, Comintern and Profintern, but it did provide a base for communist agitation. To what extent then was it successful?

As mentioned above, the main communist-inspired unions were the agricultural workers, chemical workers, builders and woodworkers. Sections of the textile, metal and miners' unions sympathised with the revolutionary opposition, as did several smaller organisations, e.g. the Union of Transport and Commercial Workers. Some of the leaders of these unions were important trade unionists before the war, namely Josef Teska (woodworkers), Karel Tetenka (builders) and Josef Hais (chemical).¹⁸⁶ Others became prominent in the union movement only after October 1918, notably Arno Hais and Ferdinand Nádvorník (chemical), Jaroslav Handlř (woodworkers), Václav Bolen (agricultural workers) and Josef Pergl (a militant metalworker official from the Ostrava area).¹⁸⁷ It is possible that incumbent communist representatives in the leaderships coopted sympathisers onto higher union organs over the heads of the membership and the rest of the board. This in turn forced the dispossessed rightists to form splinter unions, as was the case with Piták's ancillary builders' union. These were founded as opposition groups to the leftist parent organisations, but support for the new bodies was by no means unanimous, especially in the large chemical union.¹⁸⁸ This tends to suggest that other factors influenced the rank and file of leftist unions.

Generally speaking, agricultural, textile and chemical workers were among the lowest paid, a fact recognized in a report by the regional OSČ secretariat in Pardubice.¹⁸⁹ According to one union secretary, Bečvarovský, the chemical industry in mid-1920 suffered most as it was banned from exporting, and Šída from Ostrava reported that employees received such low wages that "almost daily" strikes occurred in the region.¹⁹⁰ The poor economic position of workers in these industries was a radicalising feature, one which communists were able to exploit above all in small and medium-size enterprises. Here workers were more open to ill-treatment at the hands of management, and trade union activity was less well organised.

The left, though, was far from strong in the major industrial plants, the Škoda works in Plzeň, the Vítkovice ironworks, the Brno armaments factories and the Ringhoff metalworks in Prague.¹⁹¹ To be sure, the Škoda plants remained a bastion of social democracy in the 1920s with only 600 Red Unionists.¹⁹² It is almost impossible to establish with any certainty why some regions were more left-orientated than others. The

left was strongest in Kladno, possibly owing to the traditional militancy of the miners and metalworkers and the fact that the left concentrated its attention on that area in the period 1918 to 1919.¹⁹³ Communists were influential in the "minority" regions of Slovakia, northern Bohemia and Ruthenia, and enjoyed support in several OSČ district trade union councils, in particular Brno, Hodonín, Třebíč, Slaný, Mladá Boleslav and Beroun among others. Certain working class quarters of Prague also came under leftist leadership: Žižkov, Vysočany and Smíchov, although the rightists retained overall control of the capital.

The revolutionary opposition gained influence through its use of press campaigns, widespread agitation in local groups, and later the formation of communist cells, which aimed at discrediting union leaders. There is every reason to suggest that such agitation and propaganda bore fruit, especially in poorer paid industrial branches and in unions where the left held leading positions. In addition, KSČ members were directed to infiltrate union organisations, as in the case of Josef Jonáš in the Agricultural Workers' Union. He was sent a telegram in the summer of 1921 telling him to join the union secretariat.¹⁹⁴ Similar practices may have been common throughout 1921 and 1922.

A directly non-indigenous element was the dissemination of Comintern and Profintern material from abroad. This became an increasingly important factor by late 1921. According to the memoirs of one Red Unionist, the Czech and German opposition received brochures from Leipzig which had been secretly transported across the border. Several thousand copies of the pamphlet "*Moscow or Amsterdam?*" were acquired, issues of the Comintern journal *The Communist International* were procured from Hamburg, and the German Communist Party paper, *Die Rote Fahne*, was donated by sympathisers in Berlin and Vienna.¹⁹⁵ Direct links between Comintern agents and Czech communists likewise developed, particularly from early 1922. Several official reports confirmed Comintern interference in Czechoslovak domestic affairs and documented the passage of agents from Germany to Czechoslovakia.¹⁹⁶

It can thus be argued that the merger of two broad trends, internal discontent and external direction and propaganda, provided the foundation for communist activity in the Czech trade union movement. The aim was to discredit the OSČ union leaders, propagate revolutionary tactics

and ideology, and ultimately gain control of the entire movement, preferably from within, but by splitting if necessary. The KSČ and the trade union opposition did not follow a carefully conceived, organised plan of action, but gradually evolved towards the ideas of Moscow over a period of two years.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SPLIT IN THE OSC AND THE FORMATION OF THE MVS

The ten months from January to October 1922 witnessed a bitter struggle between the right and left wings of the OSČ for control of the future direction of the Czech trade union movement. At the end of January, the seventh OSČ congress resulted in a victory for the supporters of the Amsterdam International, whereupon a short period of relative calm ensued. The left, however, soon began to conduct an increasingly vociferous campaign for the revolutionary principles and methods of the Comintern and Profintern, which culminated in the expulsion of two communist-led unions in the summer. Following this, preparations were made for the formation of a communist union body, and the founding congress of the International All-Trade Union Organisation (*Mezinárodní všeodborový svaz*—MVS) was held at the end of October.

The Seventh OSČ Congress

The seventh OSČ all-union congress convened in Prague between 22 and 26 January 1922. It was immediately preceded by a preliminary meeting of communist delegates on the evening of 21 January, at which Arno Hais was “sharply critical” of the action of Bolen’s Agricultural Workers’ Union. The divisions within the revolutionary trade union opposition were evidently still far from healed. Unity was partially restored

with the ratification of a leaflet published by communist trade unionists entitled, *Class Struggle or Class Understanding?*, addressed to all delegates and workers in Czechoslovakia.¹

The leaflet stressed that communists were opposed to breaking trade union unity and would remain in the OSČ should the majority vote for Amsterdam. In an attempt to appease those who believed communist unions would be subordinate to the party, the pamphlet declared,

we communists place the class above the party, the cause above the individual and the interests of the working class above the policy of the party.

Communists were wholeheartedly behind the united front tactic and saw their task as capturing union organisations for the revolutionary class struggle in stark contrast to the reformists' "nonsensical" hope of a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism.² This idea reflected the basic dilemma of communist theory: how to forge a united front with social democratic workers and leaders, while simultaneously "capturing" unions from within.

The congress itself opened in an atmosphere of tension and conflict. The banned delegates from Bolen's union attempted to enter the hall promising the pay the union's outstanding dues, but were restrained by the doormen. Similarly, the Profintern representative, Jansen, who had not been officially invited, was prevented from delivering his speech.³ Neither outcome was a good omen for the left. When proceedings finally began the first day proved an anti-climax, consisting primarily of welcoming speeches and a long report by Tayerle on the activities of the OSČ. The only moment of confrontation came when the oppositionist Jaroslav Handlř proposed a limitation on the voting rights of the so-called "virilists," i.e. secretaries, editors and other paid union officials, the vast majority of whom backed the Amsterdam lobby. His proposal was defeated.⁴

The second day revealed sharp and profound differences of opinion from successive speakers. General Secretary Tayerle and his leadership's policies were harshly condemned by several leftist delegates. Indeed, Handlř's personalized attack on Tayerle, in which he accused him of being two-faced, did not leave a very favourable impression on many

delegates and did little to further the appeal of the left.⁵ The main thrust of the opposition's attack was directed against the leadership's failure to fulfill the great hopes and promises of October 1918. Even where reforms had been made they were often ineffectively implemented. Kapoun stated that the executive's concessions to the capitalists were to blame for the split in the trade union movement.⁶ Galla felt that Tayerle's ineffectual activity against the Law on Terror and against the reduction of public employees' wages demonstrated that the OSČ was not defending the workers' interests. Trade union deputies in parliament had formed a "pact" with the bourgeoisie and were betraying traditional class principles and becoming part of the political elite'.⁷ This sentiment was eloquently expressed by Šrámek, who said,

the workers view sadly the fact that our trade union representatives who are deputies in the National Assembly have not asserted their influence in the drafting of certain laws and have not stood directly against the bourgeoisie in the Assembly.

He gave as an example the socialisation programme, which for various reasons had been repeatedly delayed.⁸

However, it was not all plain sailing for the left. Several prominent OSČ officials, chief among them Hampl and Vojtěch Dundr, forcefully defended past policies and roundly criticised the left's lack of concrete proposals for achieving socialist revolution. Its method was simply to "repeat slogans."⁹ Lev Winter claimed that the theories of Lenin and the Russian Bolsheviks were based on an "incorrect understanding of Marxism."¹⁰ On a more domestic note, Krombholz openly blamed the communists for the loss of union members and for the divisions in the labour movement. According to him, the December General Strike had benefited the bourgeoisie by disorganizing the workers. It was not "... trade union work, but slavish service for Moscow, not for the proletariat."¹¹ Dundr defended the links between the OSČ and capital as they represented merely:

a struggle for better working and wage conditions, ... a struggle for social reform. This 'cooperation' with capital is a continual fight against the capitalist mode of production.¹²

Josef Pergl, a leading communist from Ostrava, having first denied that the left wished to split the union movement, preferred to view Dunder's road to socialism as class collaboration. He declared that the socialists in the government and National Assembly were totally subservient people, a fact which proved the weakness of opportunist, reformist policies. In his second contribution, Pergl argued that Social Democrats who collaborate with employers and the government in the introduction of lower wages and higher prices care more for the consolidation of the state than for the proletariat. Although this pronouncement was greeted by cries of "You're not telling the truth!", he concluded,

if you speak with the workers, even mainly social democratic workers, you will find out that as a result of capitalist and employer pressure everyone is turning away from the old, out-dated system of gradual development.¹³

Pergl declined to say whether this negative response to OSČ practices signified a positive attitude towards revolutionary methods, but clearly his words implied this.

Perhaps the most sensational speech was delivered by Slezák from Prostějov. He caused uproar in the hall by informing it of a secret meeting he had had in October 1919 with a commissar from Moscow, Synek, who in reply to the question, "why has Moscow sent you to us?", answered, "we have only one mission: to smash trade union and political organisations and bring them into the Red International. . . ." This bombshell was followed by loud applause from one side of the hall and indignant cries of "You're lying!" from the other. Slezák ended by asserting that the "exponents of the Moscow International" strengthen capitalist attacks by smashing the unity of the working class.¹⁴

Such provocative invective was tempered only rarely, one example being the speech of Vilém Brodecký, the leading "centrist" and an important figure in both the Railwaymen's Union and the SDP. He warned against political extremes in trade union affairs, but recognised that the OSČ had made mistakes, especially immediately after the nationalist revolution of October 1918, when it had been insufficiently energetic in exploiting the favourable situation.¹⁵ Despite these efforts, Brodecký could do nothing to bridge the profound divisions at the congress, which were admirably summed up by Havlovec when he said,

if only the worker delegates knew that they have to decide between two world outlooks . . . whether to be Social Democrats or Communists, then an answer could be more easily found.¹⁶

Unfortunately the gulf between the two world outlooks made no permanent answer possible. Even the seemingly decisive result of the vote on the Moscow or Amsterdam question proved to be merely a temporary solution.

The proposal to leave I.F.T.U. and join the Profintern, submitted by the Union of Builders and the Brno trade union council, resulted in the defeat of the pro-Moscow tendency. A total of 339 delegates, representing 338,447 members, voted to remain in the Amsterdam International, while 227 delegates, representing 222,027 members, voted to join the Profintern.¹⁷ The victory of the centre-right was also reflected in the composition of the 15-member Central Council and the 10-member Supervisory Committee. Two leftists, Josef Hais and Karel Tetenka, gained seats on the Council, while only one was elected to the Committee, even though the numerical strength of the left warranted representation of at least one-third. The protest of the opposition delegates was outvoted by 306 to 220, and the congress ended in total triumph for the centre-right.¹⁸

Although the seventh OSČ congress decided to remain in the Amsterdam International, the communist press was defiant. The ultra-left *Komunistka* claimed that "an artificial majority" had been created by the appointment of almost 50 percent of delegates and by the presence of 180 "virilists."¹⁹ The Chemical Workers' organ, *Dělník*, stated that, "the real will and mood of trade unionised and organised workers was not expressed at this congress."²⁰ An MVS report from 1926 went so far as to declare that the vote:

. . . of course did not respond to the power positions of both groups among the broad mass of members, for it was obvious that the membership stood predominantly on the side of the revolutionaries.²¹

Právo lidu on the other hand accused the opposition of using terror at union meetings to gain a majority, and proudly proclaimed "*the absolute*

defeat of the communists.”²² The OSČ journal, *Sjednocení*, celebrated “the victory of trade union ideas” at the congress, and emphasised once again that OSČ unions were neither SDP nor KSČ organisations, but were neutral in their relations with political parties.²³

The whole question of the relationship between the trade unions and the party now came to the fore. Clearly, the two sides had diverging conceptions of what the KSČ decision to adhere to congress rulings would actually mean in practice. The OSČ leadership saw it as a promise to refrain from attacks on the general line of the union and above all to maintain trade union unity.²⁴ The communists intended to abide by congress decisions only to the extent of not directly breaking unity and forming independent organisations. The majority supported the united front tactic of capturing unions from within. Following Comintern instructions, the KSČ demanded the freedom to criticise and agitate where it saw fit, and in this way attract the mass of union members to revolutionary positions.

However, one must be careful when using the term “KSČ.” The Communist Party was *not* a homogeneous unit, but divided between those who backed the united front concept of work within reformist unions, and those who advocated a more belligerent stance towards the “enemies” of yesterday, including an offensive against unity if necessary.²⁵ The revolutionary unionists were likewise split. Václav Bolen wrote in *Komunist*a that at the OSČ congress the opposition had been divided into two groups: one around the chemical workers, who accepted the idea of the “minority submitting to the majority” and “unity at any price,” and the other around the agricultural labourers, who specifically rejected “unity at any price” since the reformist majority was purely relative, the opposition representing the real majority.²⁶ Bolen was in a minority at this time, both within the KSČ and the trade union movement, largely because of his sectarian viewpoints. One should always bear in mind these divisions within the communist movement when discussing the events of the 1920s.

The first issue after the seventh congress to reveal the gulf between the OSČ and the KSČ was the miners’ strike of February 1922. The dispute started in the Falknov (Sokolov) region in north-west Bohemia after employers had demanded wage-cuts, and soon spread to all mining areas, involving 135,000 workers.²⁷ On 9 February, Hampl condemned

the efforts of the KSČ to politicise the strike, and Tayerle opposed the call for a general strike on the grounds that it was "our last weapon" The February report on OSČ activity mentioned that KSČ agitation among miners in the Ostrava field had brought about fresh disputes after the strike had officially ended.²⁸ Similar reports came from Kladno.²⁹ The tactics adopted by the KSČ during the strike were on the whole unsuccessful. The party strove to expand the struggle throughout the trade union movement via the united front policy, but ultimately in vain.³⁰ The dispute ended in a compromise when the employers agreed that wages should be index-linked to the price of essential commodities.

Communist strike tactics called forth a series of complaints from the OSČ leadership, which protested against the "systematic, personal and unrealistic, attacks of communist journals."³¹ Furthermore, the tactics of "some individuals" in the KSČ were aimed at weakening union organisations, and the entire Comintern thesis of the united front led to "destructive work" within the trade union movement.³² The Communist Party had used the miners' struggle to call for a revolution, even an isolated one, which was "madness" and a simple imitation of Russian methods.³³ The OSČ Central Council condemned communist agitation, which incited hatred towards members of other political parties, thus breaking the promise of maintaining union unity.³⁴

The united front tactic, viewed through Social Democratic eyes, was perceived as a mere manoeuvre:

. . . Communist tactics and subversive activities do not lead to a united proletarian front, but weaken it. They are simply a new means of splitting trade unions and subjecting them to the Communist Party.³⁵

This argument was forcefully defended by two OSČ representatives, Kadlec and Němeček, and by Tayerle himself, at a meeting in April.³⁶

Some opposition trade unionists also doubted the efficacy of the united front policy. Šroubek from Prague noted that the lack of class-consciousness among the mass of trade unionised workers was an obstacle to the creation of a united front.³⁷ If this were so, the revolutionary opposition faced vast problems, which ultra-leftists like Bolen sought to circumvent by forming separate, minority communist unions.

Despite Comintern and Profintern pressure, this is precisely what occurred later in 1922. As Alexander Lozovsky, the head of the Profintern, stated in February 1922:

of course we are against splits. But we can in no circumstances conclude from that that we shall not make use of splits organisationally when *we win the majority in a union*.³⁸

The aim was to attract, by splitting if necessary, the mass of members to the Red flag, including union machinery property and finances.³⁹ In this way Moscow left the door open for the ultras to justify a split simply by arguing, as Bolen did, that a "real majority" supported communism.

Despite the fact that the united front was sceptically received by some people in the party, the revolutionary opposition did score one or two successes in early 1922. The Stoneworkers' and Shoemakers' union congresses in March and April respectively, while formally pronouncing themselves loyal to the OSČ, simultaneously adopted resolutions attacking its policies and endorsing the methods of the Profintern. Despite Tayerle's personal intervention at the Stoneworkers' congress, the resolution was narrowly accepted by 1,574 votes to 1,325, and the right captured only one seat on the new 7-member union board.⁴⁰ The OSČ central secretariat took no disciplinary action against the two unions, but merely reiterated its claim that "the destructive action of the Communist Party is weakening and breaking the trade union movement."⁴¹

These two minor triumphs could not paper over the deep divisions within the communist camp between supporters and opponents of the united front tactic. In order to establish some kind of unity on this and other questions, a KSČ national conference on 16 and 17 April 1922 adopted a resolution entitled *The Activities and Tactics of Communists in the Trade Union Movement*. The document declared that the aim of communists was to:

... disentangle the broad mass of workers from the influence of the reformist leaders and their harmful and disruptive tactic of class understanding, and to lead trade unions onto the road of revolutionary class struggle.

Communist fractions were to be created immediately in all factories and union groups, and all communists were to be concentrated in these fractions. Those individual unions which wished to abandon the OSČ were ordered to remain in the reformist union and work for a united advance. Should the reformists expel "individuals and whole groups," action for readmittance should begin at once. However, if several groups were expelled from one union, they should merge. Finally, party discipline had to be upheld, since "divided action between the trade unions and the party is doomed to failure."⁴²

The conference thus endorsed the united front tactic and rejected the idea of forming separate trade unions. It was nevertheless stated that if opposition groups were expelled, they should amalgamate, which suggests that the nuclei of independent communist organisations were to be created. Evidently the KSCŽ recognised the possibility of expulsions, but was unable or unwilling to prevent them partly because the sizeable leftist minority remained unreconciled to the moderate united front tactic. The ultra-leftist, Choráz, writing shortly after the party conference, asserted that the united front should not be an instrument directed solely against capitalism, but should also be used "... against the servants of capitalism, the reactionary trade union bureaucracies."⁴³

Expulsion

Soon after the April conference an opportunity arose to put these fighting words into practice, namely the strike of metalworkers in central Bohemia. This was to be a vital link in the chain leading to the mass expulsion of communists from the OSČ. According to a report of the Union of Metalworkers, the cause of the dispute was not only wage conditions. Management wanted to lower production costs without losing profits and also to weaken the union, the most powerful OSČ organisation. The conflict originated when, on 31 March, the employers demanded a 25 percent cut in earnings and expanded this to include workers in north Bohemia, Ostrava and Slovakia. In the face of this onslaught "all the organisation's strength was dedicated to preparing for the defence of the workers' interests." After several weeks of negotiation, the union representatives proposed an 8 to 10 percent cut, the employers insisting on 20 percent. A strike was then imminent.

The union negotiators rejected the management's demands, but agreed to propose to the workforce a 15 percent reduction, whereupon a vote was held in fifty factories. The result was decisive: 21,584 workers voted to reject the employers' offer and 7,836 to accept. The strike then started on 3 May, involving forty factories in Greater Prague and ten in the provinces.⁴⁴ A one-day general strike was organised in Prague on 19 May, the effect of which was total, even local hosteleries closing down.⁴⁵ On the same day *Komunista*, living up to its radical image, called on metalworkers to force their union secretaries to expand the strike into a nationwide dispute.⁴⁶ This appeal soon received official KSČ support.⁴⁷

After the success of the one-day strike in Prague the employers proposed a 10 percent cut to become effective from the end of June. Once again a vote was held: 21,691 workers refused to accept the offer, 6,547 agreed and 5,277 abstained, whereupon the employers proposed an extension until the end of August. At this point the boards of the unions involved decided that the dispute should be terminated, as only 63 percent of the total workforce had voted for a continuation of the strike, not the necessary 70 percent. The 5,000 workers who had abstained were thus considered to be opposed to the strike. The decision to end the dispute was ratified by a meeting of the strike committee, shop-stewards and union representatives on 31 May, and work resumed on 2 and 3 June with no dismissals in reprisal.⁴⁸ The communists felt that this compromise solution had been agreed upon "behind the backs of the workers."⁴⁹

Indeed, throughout the strike the Union of Metalworkers' journal, *Zájmy kovodělníků*, kept up a running battle with *Rudé právo* openly condemning the reports in the communist daily.⁵⁰ The communists "consciously" attempted to harm and split the metalworkers' union organisations by using the strike to agitate politically and to disseminate the ideas of the Moscow International.⁵¹ The Communist Party:

made the metalworkers' struggle an object of its political whims. It did not take any risks and did not afford any moral or material aid to the strikers, and yet it wanted to decide on and prescribe the means of defence.⁵²

For its part, the communist press had throughout 1922 published sporadic attacks on the right-wing OSČ bastion, particularly against the

union secretary, Antonín Hampl.⁵³ These attacks increased in intensity immediately before, during and after the strike.

The bitter internal strife within the Union of Metalworkers ended sadly on 7 June with the expulsion of communist groups and individual members.⁵⁴ Prague was particularly hit. Groups in Holešovice, Smíchov, Kobylisy and Hostivař were among those affected.⁵⁵ The union board decided to expel those members who had broken "organisational discipline," undermined the workers' morale, and consciously contravened union rulings. They had not been expelled for "defending their opinions," as *Rudé právo* claimed, but for "divisive activity, undermining loyalty and flagrant slander."⁵⁶ On 10 June the expelled communists formed an "Opposition Committee of Metalworkers," which ceased paying union dues and called for an extraordinary union congress. This demand was rejected by the board on the grounds that it had been issued "on the orders of *Rudé právo*."⁵⁷ The Committee was provisionally accepted into the Union of Chemical Workers and its appeal to the membership received a positive response in some areas of Greater Prague. Splits also occurred in Moravia and Slovakia.⁵⁸ However, the majority of members remained loyal to the union.⁵⁹ Thus, a combination of communist pressure and a hardline Social Democratic response resulted in the break-up of the Union of Metalworkers and the formation of an independent opposition grouping, albeit within the largest revolutionary union, the Chemical Workers.

The accusations of the metalworkers' board, if accepted as accurate, throw some light on the tactics used by the KSČ and revolutionary opposition to gain influence in OSČ unions. It was asserted that throughout early 1922 communists had attacked pro-Amsterdam unions in the press, at membership conferences and at factory meetings. Union leaders were portrayed as "traitors of the working class," agitation which helped to bring about a breakdown of discipline. Cells were formed on the orders of the KSČ and these kept in close contact with local party organs and with each other. Their aim was to carry out "disruptive activity" and capture union organisations from within. Such work was "veiled and covered up by various means."⁶⁰ The overall strategy seems to have been to gain control of the traditionally largest and most powerful OSČ union, thereby presenting a *fait accompli* to other centre-right organisations in the hope that they would follow the line under the pressure of communist members.⁶¹

According to a subsequent metalworkers' report, this strategy was executed in various ways. The Communist Party sent reliable shop-stewards to provincial areas to "incite hatred" among the workers towards union leaders. "This was in preparation for a fight to take over the union." Communist unionists were also instructed to withhold membership dues and demand an extraordinary congress, at which the opposition could hope to win majority support. "This was not an accidental course of action, but the result of a premeditated tactic ratified by the ruling organs of the Communist Party." It was designed to capture the strongest OSČ union from within and to replace union officials with "... new people, who were completely and unreservedly in the services of the Communist Party and the Red Trade Union International."⁶² If indeed this was the aim, the plan backfired leaving the union severely weakened.

Such tactics were not welcomed even by some communists. At a meeting of OSČ secretaries on 13 June Salač from Slaný stated that political agitation "poisons" (*otravovat*) the working class, and communist tactics "... lead to the destruction of trade unions." An ex-party member, Hrabě from Kladno, condemned the demagogy of the KSČ during the metalworkers' strike, saying, "I was thrown out of the party because I told the truth to the workers." Furthermore, the leading Kladno party activist, Antonín Zápotocký, had affirmed that a general strike was nonsensical, but in public adopted a "political policy." A non-communist, Divácký from the Slovačko region in south-east Moravia, reported that functionaries in his area were not elected for their ability and character, but for their political reliability as communists. Many local OSČ members had therefore left, the majority joining Christian Social unions.⁶³ It was claimed that of the 600 OSČ workers in the Hodonín district only ninety remained, the rest having transferred to the Christian Unions.⁶⁴ Another OSČ secretary, Chalupník, inferred that the communists were forming an all-trade union centre and intended to acquire the OSČ apparatus for their own ends. Tayerle, describing the KSČ as a "small party with a simple, negative policy," said, "the trade union movement cannot be subordinated to one political party" He considered it impossible to be a member of the OSČ and work simultaneously for the Profintern.⁶⁵

Five days before this meeting, Tayerle had appealed to all employees of the OSČ to sign an "oath of allegiance" to its principles, emphasising

that certain secretaries were trying to deepen the disputes between the right and left. The oath maintained that the conditions on entry into the Profintern and the tactical directives of the KSČ were harmful to trade union unity.⁶⁶ The OSČ executive devised the oath more as a last-ditch measure to ensure internal support for its policy of expelling member organisations, rather than as a means of preserving unity. Indeed, the very same gathering voted to expel the Woodworkers' Union. The immediate reason for this drastic step was the resolution of the fourth woodworkers' congress held on 4 and 5 June. The resolution expressed sympathy with the methods of the Profintern, an organisation described as "the safe guarantor of the victory of the working class."⁶⁷ At the same time the congress applied for membership in the Amsterdam Woodworkers' International and decided to stay in the OSČ.⁶⁸ This was an "absurdity" according to one OSČ journal.⁶⁹

It appears the left miscalculated and did not expect such a harsh reaction from the OSČ leaders, only a severe reprimand as received by the stoneworkers in April. But instead of calmly witnessing the slow decline of its influence, the OSČ executive went on to the offensive following the tough example of the Metalworkers' Union.⁷⁰ Intrinsic to this positive stance was an admission that all hope of continued organisational unity had to be abandoned. The best that could be expected was that other communist-controlled unions would take heed of the warning and refrain from revolutionary propaganda.

The woodworkers' congress marked the turning point in relations between the OSČ and the revolutionary opposition and hence deserves further comment. At the congress the leftist union leader Jaroslav Handlíř delivered a lengthy speech on internationalism in the course of which he attempted to justify the left's position:

... we have the right and the duty to strive within the framework of the OSČ for the principles and methods of which we are convinced... and to endeavour to acquire for our opinions the majority of all workers in all unions, even the trade union centre itself.⁷¹

He strongly advocated the principles espoused by Moscow, and yet according to the union organ the congress resolution did not express "...its agreement with the principles and methods of the Profintern,"

as Tayerle had written in the *OSČ*.⁷² In fact the resolution declared that "... congress... expresses its agreement with the R.I.L.U., which by its methods stands on the principle of revolutionary socialism." The difference lay in the fact that the woodworkers did not directly support the Profintern as an organisation, but its general line of revolutionary struggle. Tayerle was thus accused of consciously and deliberately falsifying the text of the resolution in order to discredit the union in the eyes of ordinary workers.⁷³ *Sjednocení*, on the other hand, categorically denied this accusation, saying there was no difference between the two versions.⁷⁴

An important consequence of the expulsion of the woodworkers was the rapid creation of a splinter union on 13 June. Its journal, *Dřevo-dělník* (The Woodworker), contended that the communist union leadership had, on the orders of the KSČ, forced a "fateful decision" at the congress against the warnings of the *OSČ*, the protests of non-communist members and the threat of expulsion made by Tayerle during the congress debates. "An ugly comedy" had been played with the membership, none of whom wished to break links with the *OSČ*. The communist leadership under Jaroslav Handlř did not take heed of the will and interests of the members and was well aware of the "fateful consequences" of the resolution. The union chairman, Teska, had allowed Handlř, "a man who directly serves the Moscow Bolshevik government," to force acceptance of the resolutions with the help of the German and Hungarian delegates.⁷⁵ This last point seems rather simplistic when one considers that the resolution was carried by 117 votes to 24.⁷⁶ Even *Sjednocení* agreed that two-thirds of the congress were behind the Moscow International.⁷⁷

Bitter recriminations immediately followed the congress ruling. One *OSČ* representative, Němeček, stated clearly that, "the Executive Committee of the Communist Party fixes all union congresses" by means of local, provincial and national preliminary meetings. Novák likewise claimed the tobacco workers' conference resolution, which had also expressed pro-Moscow sentiments, had not been drawn up by members of that union, but by KSČ representatives who had "interfered" before the congress. Hampl summarised the *OSČ* position by saying,

the Union of Woodworkers has sacrificed its interests to the interests of the Communist Party. It is not possible to be for Moscow and

for Amsterdam at one and the same time By accepting this resolution the Union of Woodworkers has ceased to be a member of the OSČ.

Only Brožík of the Union of Miners voiced opposition declaring, "it is not necessary to speak of expulsion."⁷⁸ Hampl's proposal was carried by 29 votes to five.⁷⁹

One very interesting feature of the events surrounding the expulsion and subsequent developments was the direct intercession of the SDP in trade union affairs through its daily *Právo lidu*. In May 1922, the newspaper began to launch vitriolic attacks on the woodworkers' communist leadership. An entire series of articles under the collective title *Against the Breakers of Trade Union Unity* was published, one of which accused the union's leaders of fixing the election of congress delegates in such a way as to ensure communist success. It was asserted that, "the majority of the membership . . . is anti-Bolshevik," but had been "delivered to the tender mercies of Bolshevik propaganda against its will." The following day the blame was laid explicitly at the feet of Handlř, the "emissary of the Russian Bolsheviks," whose task was to establish a communist secretariat with the help of tens of others, which he achieved thanks to the sympathetic role of the union president, Teska. "Soon Handlř became the absolute master of the union," bringing dissension into an otherwise stable organisation. This spread from the centre to local union groups. The board did not intervene because the majority of them had "betrayed social democracy." The article concluded by demonstrating the adverse effects of communist activity on membership figures, which had dropped from a high of 52,921 in 1920 to a mere 25,000 in May, 1922.⁸⁰

Once again, this "conspiracy theory" seems somewhat simplistic, although by no means completely unacceptable. Membership figures show that at the end of 1921 the Woodworkers' Union had 28,045 members of whom 13,021 affiliated to the Red Unions in October 1922. A mere 5,039 remained loyal to the OSČ and joined the splinter union.⁸¹ Hence, one can assume that approximately 45 percent of the 1921 membership supported, or at least tolerated, the revolutionary line of the union leadership, while only 18 percent stayed faithful to social democratic principles. Having shown that the leadership did attract support

among the rank and file, one must conclude, however, that the communists' main thrust was to gain control of the union *from above*, by capturing places on the board, rather than converting the membership from below.

The SDP daily did not restrict itself to attacking the Woodworkers' Union. Other communist-led organisations came in for scathing criticism, particularly the Union of Chemical Workers. The communist "*diktat*" of the board had aroused growing resistance among the membership and yet despite the protests "the communist régime prevented the expression of opposition by all possible means." Nádvorník, the union secretary in the Ostrava region, was "hated by the membership," but protected by the union leadership. The paper asserted that twenty opposition groups with 6,000 adherents had been formed and had proposed a conference of opposition members on 28 May, because "the membership will not financially support an agitational office of the Communist Party."⁸² The conference, attended by 59 delegates representing over 10,000 members, demanded "most decisive action by the OSČ against communist disruption."⁸³ This "disruption" included the expulsion of reliable functionaries and workers, especially in the Ostrava district.⁸⁴ The opposition, led by Karel Prták, was strongest in the traditionally staunch social democratic area around Plzeň.⁸⁵ His group represented only one seventh of the total union membership (76,978 in 1921), of which 45,068 joined the MVS in October.⁸⁶

The Builders' Union was the next to come under *Právo lidu*'s hammer. The union secretary, Karel Tetenka, was branded a "well-known communist loudmouth."⁸⁷ This accusation elicited a persuasive response from the union's organ, *Stavebník*:

if we are a communist organisation it is only in that the majority of our members support the Communist Party, whose principles are better suited to carrying out the class struggle. Otherwise our trade union organisation is politically neutral, that is it concentrates in its ranks workers of all existing political persuasions. ⁸⁸

The significance of the SDP campaign against the revolutionary opposition lies in the fact that it greatly bolstered the resolve of the OSČ leaders in their decision to expel the woodworkers, and later the chemical workers. Whereas in 1921 the union leadership had attempted to steer

a middle course between the rightists in the SDP and the leftists in the KSČ, by mid-1922 the intensification of leftist activity had compelled Tayerle, Hampl and other OSČ secretaries to adopt a strongly anti-communist stance, for which they found willing support in the SDP. Indeed, this was to be expected. As *Právo lidu* affirmed, the close links between the trade union movement and social democracy represented the fulfillment of socialist ideas common to both.⁸⁹ Further pressure on the OSČ executive to deal energetically with the communist opposition may have come from the leading circles in the Amsterdam International. In May 1921 the IFTU management committee had resolved that any organisation which affiliated to the Moscow trade union International would place itself outside the ranks of the IFTU.⁹⁰ More relevantly perhaps, it has been claimed that at a "sharply anti-communist" congress of the Amsterdam International in Rome in April 1922 Tayerle had "confidential consultations" with Léon Jouhaux, a leading member of the IFTU and a prominent figure in the split in the French trade union movement in late 1921.⁹¹ Such arguments, though, remain largely conjecture.

The explosive atmosphere continued unabated after the expulsion of the woodworkers. The union accused the OSČ of breaking organisational unity by forcibly dismissing revolutionary elements from its ranks for directly political reasons, and by conferring membership on Krňánský's splinter union, the Union (*Unie* not *Svaz*) of Woodworkers.⁹²

The OSČ leaders, according to *Dřevodělnické listy*, had worked against the union on the instigation of the SDP, despite the fact that the seventh congress had not explicitly rejected all leanings toward the Profintern. Revolutionary methods and "direct struggle" were necessary, because:

up till now attempts to safeguard the influence of the working class on production with the help of social reforms have been insufficient, since in the present economic situation . . . they do not bring about an improvement in the economic position of the workers.⁹³

The ultimate solution lay in the "defeat of the private-capitalist order . . .," the utilisation of the general strike, and a united front of all workers, as demanded by the KSČ.⁹⁴

The communist press reacted almost hysterically to the expulsion. "Amsterdam splits trade unions by violence and terror" read one banner headline.⁹⁵ The official protest letter sent to the OSČ by ten opposition unions was more sober. The letter was signed by the following unions: the Chemical workers, Builders, Potters, Butchers, Stoneworkers, Carpenters, Leatherworkers, Shoemakers, Transport workers and Domestic Servants, the last eight all being relatively small organisations. The text stated that,

the decision was unjust and unfounded for if a majority of delegates, who certainly represent the will of the majority of members, express themselves for a specific method of progress in social struggles, then it is necessary to fulfill this ruling . . .

The letter concluded with the words,

if the trade union board insists on the expulsion . . . then we consider it necessary to call an extraordinary all-trade union congress in the near future in order to discuss and resolve this controversial question once and for all . . . Only an all-trade union congress has the right to decide on such important decrees, which have far-reaching consequences and threaten the unity of the trade union movement, a unity so needed at this time.⁹⁶

The assertion that only the congress had the right to expel member unions was open to doubt. The organisational rules ratified by the seventh OSČ congress made no explicit reference to such a case, but maintained that, "the aim of the Trade Union board of representatives is to implement the resolutions of congress . . .," including, presumably, the relevant resolution on continued membership in the Amsterdam International. On the other hand, the statutes declared that, "only the congress can decide on matters of principle . . ."⁹⁷ As the entire affair was perceived by the communists as one of principle, not of breaking organisational discipline, their claim did have some justification. The OSČ leaders, however, were not prepared to discuss finer legalistic points and steadfastly refused to convene an extraordinary congress. They had obviously determined to launch an offensive against the left opposition, the ferocity

of which took many communists by surprise.⁹⁸ The expulsion of the Union of Woodworkers marked only the beginning.

The first concrete step towards the formation of a communist trade union centre was the conference of revolutionary trade unionists in Brno on 25 June 1922. The conference was attended by ninety-six delegates representing twenty unions, twenty-three regional union fractions, and eighteen trade union councils. Three observers from the Executive Committee of the KSČ and one representative from the editorial boards of *Rudé právo* and the local communist daily, *Rovnost*, were also present.⁹⁹ A number of demands were issued, including the retraction of the woodworkers' expulsion, the guarantee that no one would be expelled or persecuted for his political convictions, the reiteration of the call for an extraordinary congress, and the readmittance of the agricultural workers.¹⁰⁰ More importantly, an "Agitation Committee of the R.I.L.U." was established, the task of which was to represent and coordinate the activity of the entire opposition. All union groups were to make contact with the Committee immediately and follow "strictly" its instructions.¹⁰¹ Josef Teska became chairman of the Committee and Josef Hais secretary.¹⁰²

According to a police report, one delegate, Hanzlík, said later that the conference worked out the statutes of a new union.¹⁰³ The organisational framework of this union was to be the Chemical Workers' Union, which was to concentrate in its ranks all expelled groups and individuals in order to preserve unity and create "the basis for the build-up of a large, fighting unit."¹⁰⁴ A metalworker section had previously been established, followed by a textile section in August and a glass section in December.¹⁰⁵

It is evident from this organisational activity that a majority of opposition trade unionists wanted to form separate, independent communist organisations as early as June 1922, i.e. *before* efforts aimed at readmittance had been exhausted. This was acknowledged by Rudolf Barášek at a meeting of the Greater Prague trade union council on 2 July. He said the proletariat had no need of union secretaries, and therefore "...must create a new body of trade union organisations."¹⁰⁶ The chemical section report of 1926 provided further evidence of this desire to form a new union body:

...as a consequence of the preliminary decision of the Brno conference...it was decided to establish a united all-trade union organisation of the whole working class in all industrial branches...

Moreover, at the end of July the board of the Chemical Union resolved to join an MVS as a chemical section should such an organisation be founded.¹⁰⁷

The radical left, of course, had for some time been advocating such a step. As early as May its organ, *Komunista*, had carried a series of articles entitled, *How and when are we to gain control of trade union organisations?* In one article Bolen asked,

why should we support the OSČ, whose aim is not the struggle against capitalism, but the disruption and defeat of the communist workers' party?¹⁰⁸

Many contributors were likewise opposed to the idea of "unity at any price."¹⁰⁹ The most extreme opinion was expressed by Choráz, who wrote,

we have won over social democracy and have a mass Communist Party, and we will win over the trade unions and have a great trade union movement within the R.I.L.U.

The slogan "capture and don't be afraid to rupture" could easily be changed to "rupture, but capture."¹¹⁰ Certain communists were thus prepared to admit publicly that they would split OSČ unions and form independent organisations "within the R.I.L.U."

These ultra-leftist notions had been vehemently condemned by the second enlarged ECCI plenum in June 1922. A resolution adopted on the issue stated that the trend towards splitting trade unions,

which is appearing, albeit in a nebulous and vague form, in the Jílek-Houser group, helps to strengthen the tendency towards disruptive work. . . . The Party must energetically and, if necessary, with the utmost harshness act against any attempt to split trade union organisations.¹¹¹

It is of crucial significance to note that the communist movement was seriously divided in the summer of 1922. This fact was exposed in a declaration of the Executive Committee of the KSČ on the occasion of

the Brno conference. It expressly stated that "the Party . . . does not pursue any aims directed towards the build-up of independent communist organisations," but defended the principle of a united revolutionary trade union movement of all workers, which was to be a "... centralised fighting army" against capitalism.¹¹² The KSČ found backing for this line not only from the ECCI, but also from the Profintern Central European Bureau in Berlin, which sent a letter to the communist opposition arguing that the formation of an all-trade union base in Czechoslovakia would be premature. Hence relations with the OSČ should be continued.¹¹³

The event which made this impossible was the expulsion of the Union of Chemical Workers on 13 July.¹¹⁴ The reasons for this measure were given in an article entitled *Why the Union of Chemical Workers cannot remain in the OSČ*. The three main factors were that the union had participated in the "illegal trade union conference" in Brno at which it accepted as members workers who did not belong to the chemical profession, i.e. metalworkers; the union journal, *Dělník*, had attacked the OSČ leadership;¹¹⁵ and secretary Josef Hais had been elected to the Agitation Committee of the RILU, thereby contravening the resolution of the seventh congress.¹¹⁶ In a nutshell the union had been expelled for "clearly breaking organisational discipline."¹¹⁷

The communist press saw the expulsion as a conspiracy orchestrated by the SDP and bourgeois parties. *Rudé právo* informed its readership that the plan was to liquidate the revolutionary opposition, split the trade union movement and thus consolidate bourgeois and agrarian power. Tayerle, Hampl, Brodecky and other union leaders in the SDP hierarchy were "... mere instruments for executing the plan of Messrs. Beneš, Švehla and company."¹¹⁸ The split was effected by Rudolf Bechyně and other leading social democrats "on the orders of the capitalists," who feared communist influence after the one-day general strike in Prague on 19 May.¹¹⁹ The aim of the KSČ on the contrary was a united front of workers, not the breaking of organisational unity.¹²⁰

The Founding Congress of the MVS

The most urgent consideration for the revolutionary opposition after the expulsion of the chemical workers was the formation of an independent communist union. On 4 August Václav Bolen called for action, not

merely discussion, on this question. He exhorted leftist unions to stop paying membership dues to the OSČ, and to transfer the money to expelled groups even at the risk of deepening the split. Another author, Jarolímek, suggested the need for a "new organisational superstructure."¹²¹ It is reasonable to assume that these and similar articles had some effect on vacillating oppositionists, although the decision to form the MVS had surely already been taken.

This is not to say that no effort was expended on attempts to renew unity. According to *Dělník*, several "protest letters" were sent to the OSČ calling for the readmittance of the expelled unions, but no reply was forthcoming.¹²² However, Tetenka stated plainly at the third Builders' congress in November that the "elected commission" founded by the Brno conference in June did not execute its duty to negotiate immediately with the OSČ, but decided to form an all-trade union organisation. This was done even though the OSČ confirmed its willingness to negotiate, albeit at a later date.¹²³ In reality, discussion was out of the question. On 17 August the OSČ board of representatives voted by fourteen to five to consummate the split organisationally by formally admitting Piták's chemical workers and Krňanský's woodworker splinter unions into the OSČ framework. The parent unions led by Hais and Teska were only to be readmitted on condition that they voted to uphold the decrees of the seventh congress, as well as the resolutions of the higher OSČ organs.¹²⁴ These stipulations were obviously unacceptable to the left, the OSČ "offer" being purely academic.

This was proven the very next day when a conference of the Agitation Committee and the boards of the revolutionary unions at the *UZabranských* tavern in the working class district of Karlín, while insisting on a "united workers' trade union front," demanded immediate preparatory work for "*the establishment of a united International All-Trade Union Organisation in the ČSR for workers of all nationalities and unions . . .*" It was further decided to cease all payment of union dues to the OSČ centre and to convene an extraordinary union congress "as soon as possible."¹²⁵ This was later arranged for the 26 to 29 October.¹²⁶

Vladimír Dubský, one of the leading Czech historians of this period, sees the Karlín conference as a reversal of the tactical line of the KSČ. Significantly, he considers that the practical implementation of the conference decisions meant that "...revolutionary trade unionists would

admit full responsibility for the consummation of the break-up of the union movement. . . ." The formation of an independent, strictly centralised communist union would automatically liquidate the possibility of maintaining direct contact with the mass of reformist workers, and thus create a serious obstacle to the introduction of united front tactics. Therefore, the KSČ adopted a critical stance towards the conclusions of the conference, and at a meeting of the Executive Committee between 17 and 19 August repeated the old line: to resist resolutely all new splits by the OSČ and to exhaust all possibilities of renewed unity. The Profintern Executive likewise stated on 11 September that the congress should go ahead with invited OSČ representatives, but with only one point on the agenda: the renewal of unity. According to Dubský, "concentrated pressure" from the Executive Committee of the KSČ and Profintern was required in order to force the trade union leftists to submit to these directives.¹²⁷

In the final analysis, the union leftists did *not* submit. The principal reason for this was that the determination of the OSČ leadership to expel recalcitrant revolutionary unions fostered growing resistance among hitherto moderate communist trade unionists, who began to align themselves more behind the positions of the ultra-left than behind Moscow and the pro-united front Šmerlite majority on the Executive Committee. Such a radical shift in opinion meant that the Comintern, Profintern and KSČ became increasingly out of touch with the feelings of most revolutionary trade unionists from at least June 1922. One could even argue that the Party leadership, which as we have seen was slow to adopt concrete policies on the trade union question and tended to downgrade such activity, even to the extent of attracting ECCI censure, possessed little authority over communist trade unionists in this crucial period.¹²⁸ It also seems possible that the trade union issue was hardly discussed at Executive Committee meetings in September and October.¹²⁹ At that time, the Party was preoccupied with its own internal ruptures, which resulted in the expulsion of the Jílek-Bolen group.¹³⁰ Shortly after the Karlín conference the split in the OSČ was taken a stage further with the expulsion of local and district trade union councils. The first to be expelled was the council in Moravská Ostrava on 24 August.¹³¹ The reason given by the OSČ board was that,

destructive activity had . . . manifested itself in trade union councils, some supporting directly, others indirectly the R.I.L.U. Therefore the Central Council was forced to disband these local and district councils: Banská Bystrica, Beroun, Mladá Boleslav, Dvůr Králové, Tábor, Ústí nad Labem, Český Těšín, Brno, Hodonín, Písek and Slaný.¹³²

Třebíč joined this list in October, making a total of thirteen disbanded local councils.¹³³ Unfortunately, available sources afford scant information on the activities of these councils, although a meeting of the OSČ central secretariat in November 1921 had condemned the efforts of the České Budějovice council to transfer its offices to the local Communist Party headquarters. This was seen as an attempt to politicise the trade unions by "illegal methods."¹³⁴

Having disbanded the councils, the OSČ leaders remained adamant that no renewal of organisational unity was feasible without major concessions from the communists. A board of representatives' meeting on 19 September repeated the condemnation of leftist activity and justified the expulsion of the two communist-led unions.¹³⁵ Furthermore, a Central Council conference on 5 October not only rejected the call for an extraordinary congress on the grounds that it was a "continuation of the splitting actions of the Communist Party in the trade union movement," but also intimated that any union that participated in the congress could no longer be represented in the OSČ and would be expelled.¹³⁶ Despite this ruling, in October letters were exchanged between Hais and Teska on the one side, and Tayerle on the other on the possibility of re-establishing unity, but without positive results.¹³⁷ It appears that certain oppositionists, such as Karel Tetenka and Jaroslav Handlíř, felt that all avenues of mediation had *not* been exhausted, thus contravening the KSČ demand from August. They suggested the postponement of the extraordinary congress, but met with the "resistance of individual comrades," regardless of the fact that representatives of the KSČ agreed with their position.¹³⁸ Hence, the congress went ahead as planned, which strongly implies that Hais and other leading oppositionists were powerful enough to ignore Party pressure and were intent on creating the MVS.

The MVS founding congress convened between 26 and 29 October, 1922. Its sole aim, according to the new communist trade union journal

Rudý odborář (The Red Trade Unionist), was to rebuild the unity of the trade union movement, as the Profintern had advised in September.¹³⁹ Such statements were purely propagandistic, however, since the formation of the MVS was inevitable.¹⁴⁰ Calculations of the number of delegates and union members represented at the congress vary considerably. *Rudé právo* claimed 261 delegates representing 318,685 members, as did Barášek at the congress itself.¹⁴¹ *Rudý odborář* gave slightly lower figures of 249 delegates and 312,291 members.¹⁴² Dubský in the text of his 1966 book suggested 249 delegates and 322,491 members, whereas in the notes and in an article from 1968 he agreed that this number "was obviously exaggerated . . . by 40 to 50,000 . . ." ¹⁴³ *Komunista* outdid all the others by claiming as early as July that 400,000 union members supported the Profintern.¹⁴⁴ Josef Kotek and the State Statistical Office presented a more accurate picture by publishing the actual membership at the end of 1922. At that time, the Red Unions had 89,941 members of whom 19,757 were affiliated to the so-called "independent unions," the wood, transport and leather workers. By the end of 1923 the total had risen to 168,542 members.¹⁴⁵

The congress itself was predictably deemed a "complete fiasco" by *Právo lidu*, while *Rudé právo* spoke of "absolute unanimity and unity." The SDP daily alleged that no delegates from Slovakia attended the "so-called" congress and no resolution was officially adopted. At preliminary meetings "workers and individuals who still retained a trace of trade union ideals were silenced and branded social patriots or 'Tayerlists' . . ." It was not a gathering of trade unionists, but of "intriguers and plotters," who "dominated and terrorised" the opposition. *Právo lidu* asserted that immediately after the start of the congress two distinct groups became apparent, some delegates even insisting on unity within the framework of the OSČ and on recognition of the Amsterdam International. Moreover, Tetenka and Smolík of the Builders' Union reportedly wanted to turn away from a Moscow oriented line, but found themselves in a minority, while Krátký, one of the leaders of the woodworkers, declared that half of his members had left the union and therefore he was opposed to transferring to the Chemical Union.¹⁴⁶

In stark contrast to this account, the communist press enthused over the congress. *Dělník* stated that it ". . . almost unanimously expressed itself in favour of the creation of a great new centre of trade unionised

workers—the International All-Trade Union Organisation.” Attempts had been made to “renew the movement within the framework of the OSČ, but the effort was in vain.” The formation of the MVS and its entry into the Profintern were unanimously ratified.¹⁴⁷ *Rudé právo* indicated support for the united organisational structure of the MVS and saw its establishment as “. . . the first step towards the creation of a united front of the entire trade unionised proletariat. . . .”¹⁴⁸ Thus with the foundation of the MVS the ideological and organisational split in the Social Democratic trade union movement was finalised and institutionalised. All hope of reunification was abandoned.

Predictably the two sides differed radically in their interpretations and explanations of the split, although both help us to reach a more objective conclusion. As early as September 1920 Tayerle had pinpointed the main ideological cause of the schism: the world-wide struggle between Social Democracy and Communism. This political battle, he felt, should not be brought into the trade union movement,¹⁴⁹ but given the close links between the SDP and the OSČ, the dispute in the party was bound to affect the trade unions.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, Tayerle admitted later that the break-up of the SDP was the external cause of the split.¹⁵¹

In more concrete terms, the OSČ leadership believed that the dispute in the unions was contrived solely by the machinations of the Communist Party, which sought “to gain control” of the trade union movement “. . . on the basis of the principle that union organisations should be instruments of the political action of the proletariat.”¹⁵² Quite simply,

the split. . . was the practical expression. . . of the efforts *to subordinate trade union organisations to a political party, to subordinate the trade union movement to political leadership and to make it an instrument of the Communist Party.*¹⁵³

The organisational rupture had been caused by “the destructive influence of communist operations.” Such “destructive influence” and subordination were anathema to the OSČ leaders, who maintained that “every honest socialist party must respect the independence of trade union organisations. . . .” The KSČ, on the other hand, propagated Comintern tactics within the unions and endeavoured to affiliate them to the Profintern even after the seventh congress.¹⁵⁴ The OSČ categorically rejected,

the hypocritical means by which the communist press calls for a united front, while systematically breaking and splitting trade union unity.¹⁵⁵

The SDP tended to surpass the trade union leaders in its condemnation of communist tactics, describing the appeals for a united front as "mere slogans, the aim of which is to attract the working masses to the Communist Party" ¹⁵⁶ More provocatively, a party proclamation from June 1922 declared,

the Communist Party, working on the plans of the Moscow International, has begun a ruthless struggle against the united trade union movement, trying to make it solely an instrument of the pseudo-revolutionary efforts of the Bolsheviks. Trade union organisations are to be diverted from their genuine aims and, instead of defending the essential interests of the Czechoslovak working class, they are to serve foreign political ends.¹⁵⁷

For the communist trade unionists the underlying reason for the split was the failure of the reformist leaders to defend the workers' interests against the attacks of the employers after the abortive General Strike of December 1920. The workers "...began to recognise their naiveté and illusions about the democratic republic . . .", whereupon a wave of strikes ensued against the offensive posture of the employers. These strikes were lost because the leading union officials "...did not want to leave the road of class understanding . . .", which in turn led to "...the first great clashes and antagonisms between the members and the trade union leadership" The creation of the Profintern in July 1921 was regarded as highly significant in this process:

...when its manifesto, programme and aims became known to broad strata of the working class, a very sharp differentiation process began in the trade union movement . . . (between) reformists and revolutionaries

The membership stood overwhelmingly on the side of the latter.¹⁵⁸ After the seventh OSČ congress, tension between the leaders and members

increased, particularly as a result of the failure of the miners' and metal-workers' strikes.¹⁵⁹

The blame for the actual split was put squarely on the OSČ executive for its expulsion of the Wood and Chemical Workers' Unions, while the adherents of the Profintern "did everything" possible to preserve unity. This guilt was demonstrated by the fact that the OSČ institutionalised the split by accepting splinter unions into its ranks. In response to this, the communist trade unionists "...were forced to build up their own organisations under very difficult conditions."¹⁶⁰ The overall impression of the MVS interpretation is that the decision to form an independent, communist union centre was taken extremely reluctantly as a last resort after the OSČ had rejected all attempts to re-establish unity.

These two contradictory accounts raise a number of interesting questions. How exactly did the communists gain influence in trade union organisations? Why were some unions attracted by revolutionary ideology and not others? Was the split purely a product of planned communist subversion, orchestrated by the KSČ, Comintern and Profintern? Can the end result be considered a success for the left? The answers to these questions are vital for a deeper understanding of the schism.

As noted in the previous chapter, the revolutionary left gained influence in the trade union movement through the left-wing orientation of incumbent union leaders, such as Josef Hais, Karel Tetenka and Josef Teska. In the years 1918 to 1922 these people gradually identified themselves with the ideas of revolutionary socialism and by virtue of their positions were able to propagate left-wing methods and principles in the union press and within their union structures.¹⁶¹ No less a personage than Alexander Lozovsky, the General Secretary of the Profintern, admitted in his speech to the Second World Congress in November 1922 that,

in certain countries the conquest of trade unions is understood to mean the conquest of the leading positions in the unions. When the secretaryships and chairmanships are in the hands of the communists, many communist parties rest on their laurels. . . . Only when a serious struggle begins do they realise that the masses have not yet been won over. . . . This has been the experience of the communists in Czecho-Slovakia, [and] Germany. . . .¹⁶²

Lozovsky was referring not only to those incumbent communist secretaries and chairmen, but primarily to the entire policy of *first* capturing the leading positions in union organisations, and *then* winning over the mass of the membership. Hence, he criticised the tactic of gaining control of the union movement *from above*, rather than *from below*. This was a crucial point, highlighting as it did the less than democratic methods employed by the communists, although naturally Lozovsky did not go this far in his criticisms. The validity of these methods was confirmed in self-congratulatory tones by *Rudé právo* in October 1922:

We successfully eliminated reformist bureaucrats from the leading positions in some unions by detailed internal work, and these unions pronounced themselves in favour of the principles and methods of the R.I.L.U. at their congresses.

This “internal work” consisted of forming “opposition groups,” which worked for the “revival” of union organisations.¹⁶³ The use of communist cells and fractions in local union branches and in the central administration was vital to the overall strategy. Zápotocký went so far as to claim that,

our strong trade union organisations arose precisely because we carried out detailed fraction work among Czech workers in the Amsterdam unions. As a result we achieved a majority in individual unions.¹⁶⁴

Both government and social democratic sources document the existence and activities of these cells. A report, dated 6 February 1922, by the Presidium of Regional Political Administration in Prague stated that the secret international communist office for Central Europe in Berlin, which maintained close links with Moscow, had Czech bases in Prague, Kladno and Liberec. Their task was to create local organisations and action committees, which were to increase agitational activity and disseminate communist ideas. These committees were in direct contact with groups in industrial areas, which were active among workers in all factories. Below these groups came communist cells established throughout Bohemia and Moravia, some of which had ties with their counterparts in

Germany. Cells were found in Prague, Plzeň, Liberec, Cheb, Pardubice, Olomouc, Opava, Jihlava, Prostějov, Ostrava, Přerov, Oslavany, Krnov and elsewhere.¹⁶⁵ Although the report provided details on the structure of the communist "underground," no information was given on the effectiveness of its activities. For this we must turn to social democratic sources.

As noted above, communist cells were established in the Union of Metalworkers in early 1922.¹⁶⁶ They were also formed in the Textile Workers' Union, according to a report from 1923. It was asserted that the spokesmen of the "cells and illegal committees" issued "uncalled-for criticism" of the union's actions, exhorted functionaries to misappropriate union property, and thus sowed the seeds of disloyalty among the rank and file. When the original aim of "gaining control" of existing union organisations failed, the communists decided in mid-1922 to split the union and form their own textile section within the Chemical Workers' Union.¹⁶⁷ The result was that the union lost over 40,000 members.¹⁶⁸

Judging from the available evidence, both social democratic and communist, one can conclude that in 1921 and particularly 1922, the revolutionary left conducted a two-pronged attack on OSČ unions. The first, from above, aimed at ousting rightist secretaries and officials by fair means or foul, and replacing them with trusted communists. This is what happened in the Chemical, Wood and Agricultural Workers' Unions. The second, from below through the use of secret cells, concentrated on undermining the position and credibility of union leaders and on gaining mass support by means of agitation, propaganda, lies and even illegal dealings. This method was applied more often in unions with few or no incumbent communist leaders, for instance in the Metal and Textile Workers' Unions, and later the Miners' Union. If Lozovsky is to be believed, the Czechoslovak revolutionary opposition placed more emphasis on the former than on the latter. These tactics received high praise from none other than Zinoviev. Speaking at the fourth Comintern congress in November 1922, he stated that,

we [communists] neglected certain opportunities in the trade unions. Nevertheless, our party has succeeded in rallying the largest section of the trade unions under the red flag. We must say that the united front tactic has been most brilliantly applied by the Czecho-Slovakian Party.¹⁶⁹

On the contrary, it can be argued that the application of the united front in Czechoslovakia was a failure precisely because "the largest section of the trade unions" was *not* brought "under the red flag." Zinoviev deluded himself and others if he believed the opposite. In fact, at the time of the split a mere fifteen percent of the 1921 OSČ membership affiliated to the Red Unions, including the so-called "independent unions" (the wood, transport and leather workers).¹⁷⁰

It would be facile, however, to see the schism in the OSČ as purely a product of communist subversion. Most certainly there existed a correlation between union radicalism and economic hardship, a fact recognised even by OSČ leaders. The Union report from 1926 stated that the left used the depressed economic conditions and subsequent strike wave to attack union leaders and break the faith of the workers in the trade union movement. This tactic was adopted most markedly during the miners' and metalworkers' strikes of February and May 1922 respectively.¹⁷¹ As a result of the poor economic situation, the "destructive criticism" of the communists did have some effect on the workers, "particularly those not schooled in organisation."¹⁷² This tends to suggest that new union members and younger workers were more liable to sympathise with the radical methods advocated by the opposition.¹⁷³ Unfortunately, figures on the age of communist union members are unavailable.

This analysis only goes part way to explaining communist influence. The grass-root problems of low pay and unemployment also played an important role. According to the miners' journal, *Na zdar*, pitmen suffered a 30 percent cut in wages in 1922, while metalworkers in Central Bohemia and Plzeň and some chemical workers fared even worse.¹⁷⁴ Several other branches of industry also had to endure wage cuts.¹⁷⁵ These reductions in earnings must have radicalised some workers and led to a loss of faith in union leaders. Although it would be incorrect to put forward the theory that all low income workers were communists, it does appear that a large majority of MVS members belonged to lower paid professions, namely agricultural labourers, and chemical and textile workers. Members of these unions were more inclined to accept radical methods than, for instance, better-paid metalworkers and printers. Similarly, unemployment aroused worker disaffection, although not to the same extent as cuts in wages. The number of jobless rose from 78,857 in December, 1921, to 141,308 in August, and to 232,394 in September,

1922.¹⁷⁶ In the Pardubice area alone eight textile factories employing 2,527 workers ceased production, and many other workers were laid off, especially in the shoe industry.¹⁷⁷

The above argument helps to explain why certain unions and not others favoured leftist policies. The combination of incumbent leftist leaderships, internal agitation from below and the poor economic and material position of the workforce made it possible for the communists to build up a measure of support among a sizeable minority of members in the Chemical, Agricultural, Textile, Wood, Building and Metal-working Unions. It is more difficult to conclude with any certainty whether Czechoslovak communists planned to split the OSČ and form independent organisations. This is especially hard to assess given the fact that one cannot talk of the KSČ and communist trade unionists as monolithic entities. The party was totally divided over the united front tactic, even after January 1922 when the Šmerlite majority defeated the leftist Jílek-Bolen group. From then on the party consistently denied that it wished to break trade union unity; rather it sought to gain mass support by work within reformist unions. The KSČ insisted publicly on a "united advance," but on communist terms as Zinoviev had said in December 1921.¹⁷⁸ In theory then the party, like the Comintern and Profintern, did not *openly* adopt splitting tactics.

There were, however, two major drawbacks to the concept of work within OSČ unions. First, the united front tactic was never accepted by party and trade union ultra-leftists. Throughout late 1921 and 1922 many of them demanded more offensive measures against the "reformist bureaucracy," and with the expulsion of the Woodworkers' Union the climate of opinion changed in their favour. Secondly, the ideological and power struggle implicit in the united front policy could only result in the expulsion of those revolutionary minorities who refused to abide by majority decisions. The work entailed within the united front tactic, i.e. criticism of Social Democratic union leaders, propagation of revolutionary ideas and methods and the formation of communist cells, was bound to lead to splits, as acknowledged explicitly by the OSČ. "The expulsion of the Woodworkers' and Chemical Workers' Unions was *the only possible answer* to the insincere actions. . . ." of the communists.¹⁷⁹ Both party leaders and revolutionary unionists tacitly recognised this danger, but were more concerned to place the blame on the OSČ executive.

The Comintern and Profintern played an important role in this process, initially by simply acting as a focus in the left-right dispute, and then by issuing directives to the KSČ and the revolutionary union opposition. Again though one must remember that the Comintern was divided between those who supported and those who opposed the united front tactic. As a result, directives from Moscow were often over-generalised, and sometimes downright contradictory. In 1922 Moscow, at least in public, represented a restraining voice, warning against splits and advocating work within the existing union movement. Hence, after the Woodworkers' expulsion, the Comintern and Profintern leaders were at odds with the prevailing hard-line attitude in Czechoslovakia. Moscow only became reconciled to the formation of the MVS in September, and even then saw it merely as a temporary creation.

One can thus postulate that the split in the OSČ was *not* carried out according to a detailed, pre-conceived plan elaborated in the offices of the Comintern and the KSČ. It was, however, a logical consequence of the tactics that Moscow and the party did adopt, and this was known very well by the authors of those tactics. Furthermore, the formation of the MVS represented a logical step given the traditionally diversified nature of the Czechoslovak trade union movement, whereby every major political party had its own union organisation. Many influential figures in the KSČ seemed determined to maintain this tradition.

As we have seen, in numerical terms the creation of the MVS was not a great success, approximately one in seven OSČ members joining the Red Unions in late 1922. At that time the largest sections were the chemical workers (45,068 members), the textile workers (13,307), and the metalworkers (9,843). By 1923, thanks mainly to the accession of the massive Agricultural Workers' Union, membership rose to 24 percent of the 1921 OSČ total, peaking at roughly 30 percent in 1924. Thus, no more than a substantial minority of socialist oriented workers supported the radical cause. As far as the Czechoslovak trade union movement as a whole is concerned, at no time in the 1920s did the Red Unions organize more than 12 percent of the total unionised workforce, and this despite the fact that the MVS was the only multinational union centre in Czechoslovakia, comprising Czechs, Slovaks, Germans, Hungarians, Poles, Ukrainians and Jews.¹⁸⁰ Hence, the aim of creating a "centralised army" of proletarians for the ongoing revolutionary struggle remained largely unrealised.

CHAPTER FOUR

RIFTS IN THE RED UNIONS

The history of the MVS from its foundation in October 1922 to its virtual demise in March 1929 is one of longstanding and unresolved organisational, tactical and political disputes. These often inter-related problems arose not only between the ideologically opposed communist and social democratic union centres, but also, and even predominantly, between the MVS leadership on the one hand and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and Profintern on the other. A major area of controversy was the organisational structure of the MVS and its relationship with the independent Red Unions, the builders, woodworkers and transport workers. These unions did not formally join the MVS, but affiliated to it owing to their revolutionary leanings.¹ The fundamental point at issue was the highly centralised nature of the MVS organisational structure, whereby member sections possessed little financial and administrative autonomy. The independents, in rejecting this system, insisted on their right to self-management and freedom of manoeuvre. The significance of this question is twofold. First, it exemplifies the depth of internal conflict in the Red Union movement, and secondly, it reveals the extent to which the MVS leaders were able to ignore party and Profintern instructions on the need for decentralisation.

The Debate on Organisational Structure

A debate on the optimal structure of trade union organisations had begun before the formation of the Red Unions. Certain members of the revolutionary opposition, in particular Karel Tetenka's Union of Builders, expounded the idea of industrial unionism, i.e. the concentration of all related unions into one large union, in order to overcome the reformist notion of craft unionism, which fragmented the working class and resulted in loose organisational unity.² The idea of industrial unionism was expressed at both the third Comintern congress and the founding congress of the Profintern in June and July, 1921.³ Others went even further demanding the formation of a unified all-trade union organisation with a firm centralised leadership and industrial sections, not unions.⁴ At the time, autumn 1921, this organisational form was rejected by the chemical union leaders as being "premature" in Czechoslovak conditions. Unification had to be achieved first on national lines and only then according to industry.⁵

The controversial issue took on much greater significance from June 1922, when it became clear that an independent communist trade unions organisation was to be created. At the Brno conference of opposition unionists on 28 June, widely differing opinions were voiced on the subject of the most desirable future organisational structure. In the light of the poor economic situation, it seems that the majority of delegates advocated the build-up of "... a united union of workers from all unions," which would achieve "... maximum preparedness and capacity to resist the attacks of the concentrated forces of the government, employers and reformists." This strictly centralised form was defended most forcibly by Josef Hais, leader of the powerful Chemical Workers' Union and future General Secretary of the MVS, and by several other leading oppositionists. A few delegates called for the amalgamation (*splynutí*) of all individual unions along the lines of the American "One Big Union," while others favoured the unification only of industrial workers with the creation of parallel organisations for agricultural and commercial workers. Finally, some speakers argued for industrial unions to be headed by a central superstructure.⁶ This form of organisation was designed to afford greater freedom of movement to member unions than the highly centralised model proposed by Hais.

Industrial unionism was rejected by the centralists on the grounds that it would damage "the class trade union movement" at precisely the time when the class struggle was sharpening, characterised by strong, united employer associations and the concentration of industry. Hais and his supporters argued that only the strict centralisation and unification of the revolutionary unions could combat the united strength of the employers.⁷ This was particularly true since "... industrial unions have not proved themselves a reliable guarantor of the victory of the working class..."⁸ The Brno conference resolution reflected this position, recommending the concentration of all individuals and groups expelled from the OSČ within the chemical union. This was to be the basis for the formation of a "great fighting unit" and a "centralised organisation."⁹

The Karlín conference of oppositionists on 18 August advocated the concept of a united, centralised union even more explicitly, although it was stated that individual member unions should be guaranteed due self-administration.¹⁰ The principal opponents of this centralised form were the representatives of the independent unions, the builders and woodworkers, backed by the transport and German textile workers.¹¹ In September 1922, Karel Tetenka condemned Hais's proposals, saying "... the establishment of a united, all-trade union organisation is premature," since "first it is necessary to create strong industrial unions..."¹² It is evident from these words that the seeds of the future struggle between the MVS and the independents had been sown even before the formation of the Red Unions.

The extraordinary congress of opposition unions at the end of October 1922 seems to have been a scene of lively and often heated debate.¹³ As we have seen, officially the creation of a "... united, international all-trade union organisation with united leadership and management..." was almost unanimously decreed with only a few dissenting votes.¹⁴ However, according to police reports, and indeed to several communist sources, the congress witnessed clashes of opinion on a number of subjects. As early as September, *Dělník* had admitted that, "... even in our own ranks there will be a lack of understanding for the setting up of the MVS," and that the congress would have to decide between a united union or industrial unions.¹⁵ At the congress Krátký, Handlř (woodworkers), Smolík (builders) and Mai (German textile workers) expressed doubts about the premature formation of the MVS, and the latter explicitly

demanding administrative and financial autonomy for member sections.¹⁶ Handlř proposed continued relations with the OSČ, but was unanimously outvoted.¹⁷ One police report contended that some delegates left in an angry frame of mind, saying they would leave the KSČ immediately, and complaining that the new MVS leaders had behaved "domineeringly and self-confidently."¹⁸

The attitude of the Profintern representative, Maximov (Melnichansky), is revealing. He reportedly stated that disputes among delegates could not be permitted, since the aim of the congress was to break the Amsterdam International and destroy Tayerle. Disagreement would hinder this by creating a public scandal for the Communist Party, and hence the minority had to submit to the majority. According to the MVS report from 1926, Maximov left the choice of organisational structure to the Czechoslovak comrades.¹⁹ To this end, Hais, while not totally ignoring the differences of opinion, spoke strongly in favour of a united organisation. He was willing to accept the limitations such a structure would place on the independence of sections, arguing that the support of other member-workers, especially during strikes, would serve as compensation. His battle-cry was "all for one and one for all." Financial and administrative autonomy of sections in an otherwise united union would make for inefficient organisation and merely replicate the outdated federalism of the reformist unions.²⁰ Although Hais's arguments won the day with only three out of thirty-two speakers opposing the MVS structure, the issue was not definitively solved at the congress.²¹ The debate was most definitely alive.

The reason for this was the stance taken by the Profintern. In his letter to the MVS congress, Lozovsky agreed that the formation of the union was a necessity should the OSČ leadership refuse a renewal of unity. On the vital question of organisational structure he wrote that, "it is essential to create a tightly knit, centralised organisation . . ." with a united leadership concentrating the entire working class against the attacks of capital. Nevertheless, this did not mean that industrial unions should disappear. "Our aim must be above all the build-up of real *industrial unions* on the basis of factory organisations." This would ensure that centralisation would be strictly democratic, from the base up. He went on to say that "every country creates those organisations which are best suited to the practices of its social struggles," and in Czechoslovakia this meant the formation of "centralised, industrial unions with

a real leading all-trade union centre at their head.’’²² The Profintern executive thus adopted a middle course, emphasising both industrial unionism and strict centralisation, though at this time Lozovsky seemed closer to the independents’ ideas than to Hais’s.

It appears that Lozovsky regarded the Hais model as tantamount to the “One Big Union” concept, whereby member sections would forfeit virtually all autonomy to the centre.²³ The very term “section” (*sekce*) implied a downgrading of status compared to the traditional title “union” (*svaz*). Although Lozovsky and, to a lesser extent, the independent unions saw the need for a centralised union structure, they demanded greater freedom of movement and financial autonomy for member sections. As the organisational structure evolved in practice, it became apparent that the competence of sections was indeed severely limited. The nine-member section boards were subject to veto by the centre on all the “more principled” decisions. The finances of the MVS were highly centralised. Membership dues from local groups and branches were sent to the centre’s coffers, and while in theory sections were to receive 25 percent for their own uses, in practice they often received less. The various union funds, unemployment, strike, press etc., were strictly controlled by the centre, and the union press was likewise centralised with only one journal, *Dělník*, to cover the interests of all member sections by means of regular “supplements” (*přílohy*). Furthermore, sections had to obtain the centre’s agreement before undertaking strike action. If this was neglected they would not receive strike benefits.²⁴ Such a highly centralised system was the crux of the dispute between the MVS and the independents.

The misgivings of the Profintern Executive were clearly expressed at the second world congress in November and December 1922. At this forum, Lozovsky warned of the dangers of “great internal conflict” should the MVS be organised on the basis of “One Big Union.” The objective conditions for the formation of such a union were absent in Czechoslovakia. The establishment of the MVS was too great a step forward, too quickly.

Therefore the creation of a united union instead of industrial unions . . . could be rather more harmful than beneficial to the workers’ movement in Czechoslovakia.

It could even lead to the "disintegration" of union organisations. In stark contrast to Hais's claims that the MVS answered the needs of local conditions, Lozovsky countered that, "it is especially difficult to expect success from this organisational form . . ." owing to the diverse nature of the Czechoslovak trade union movement and the possibility of a "national struggle" waged by the reformists against the MVS.²⁵ One suspects that Lozovsky was concerned about the spectre of "Czech nationalism" dominating the MVS centre to the detriment of the Slovak, German and Hungarian minorities.

To be sure, the resistance of the Liberec (Reichenberg) textile unionists to the highly centralised and largely Czech-run MVS owed something to nationalist antagonisms, although this was rarely discussed publicly.²⁶ At the second Profintern congress, their representative, Adolf Baier, protested against the October decision, saying that the MVS organisational structure was an "untried . . . risky experiment." He felt that the trade union apparatus would become ossified, organisationally unable to lead the broad masses, and thus become an obstacle to the development of revolutionary activity.²⁷ Hais attempted to justify his position by asserting that the call for a united union came "from below, from the working masses, from the workshops and factories . . ."²⁸

Lozovsky had gone even further in his criticisms at the fourth Comintern congress, also held in November and December. Here he openly attacked the Czech delegates for their "wrong ideas" on union organisation. They had propagated the notion of a united union, despite the fact that the Executive Committee of the Profintern had warned that it was premature, that many workers were against it and that it would therefore lead to great opposition. He took note of a nationalist streak among the Czechs, and argued that there was no specific French, English or Czech way, only an internationalist one.²⁹ Indeed, Lozovsky's observations on Czech nationalism were not without foundation, as illustrated by this passage from *Rudý odborář*: "We are creating our own united organisation, according to our conditions, our needs and our possibilities."³⁰ Hais too in his speech to the second Profintern congress had evoked the idea that different countries had different ways of achieving centralised organisation, and in Czechoslovakia it was by means of a united union.³¹ He even went so far as to declare that congress could not determine the form of all unions in all states, adding that,

it would be a mistake if congress opposes our attempts to build a united union in Czechoslovakia. The methods and means of the RILU struggle require centralised activity.³²

This distinct inclination towards "Czech nationalism" is highly significant in that it represents a reluctance to submit passively to the demands of Moscow. This attitude did not take the form of consistent and outspoken criticism of the Profintern line, rather one of unostentatious disobedience. What is more, it persisted throughout the 1920s, culminating in the bitter recriminations of 1928-1929. The resolute stand of the MVS leaders at the Profintern congress is one reason why Moscow was forced to accept the united union organisational structure, despite Lozovsky's insistence on industrial unionism.³³ It was not the only reason. In late 1922 the Profintern executive did not yet command sufficient authority to change directly a decision made by national member sections, and indeed may not have wished to interfere to this extent. Secondly, as Maximov said at the MVS congress, open disagreement and internal fighting would have been bad publicity for the communist cause. Thirdly, although Lozovsky was highly critical of the MVS form of organisation, both he and his colleagues in the Profintern and Comintern leaderships were convinced of the need for strict centralisation as opposed to the federalisation of the reformist unions. Fourthly, the adherents of industrial unionism in Czechoslovakia were simply in a minority, a minority moreover which bordered on the extreme right-wing of the communist movement, a fact which probably did not go unnoticed in the corridors of power in Moscow. Finally, the Czechs placed a *fait accompli* before the Profintern in the face of which Lozovsky was powerless.³⁴

Confronted by such forceful arguments the Profintern leadership was compelled, albeit reluctantly, to recognise the MVS form of organisation, while simultaneously demanding concessions from the centralists. These were spelled out in the resolution adopted "after a very vehement debate" by the special Czechoslovak Commission of the second congress. The resolution stated that "a trade union centre has been created with a united administration and separate industrial sections," the main aim of which was "... the renewal of trade union unity." However, "*the united union must be built up on the basis of the financial and organisational. . .*

independence of action (samočinnost) of the industrial sections.'³⁵

The ambiguity of the ruling enabled both sides to interpret it in their own favour, and merely encouraged the continuation of the debate. Indeed, *Rudý odborář* carried an entire series of "free platforms" on the issue, indicating the practical importance attached to the problem in late 1922 and early 1923.³⁶

The Independent Unions and Moscow

First among the opponents of the organisational structure of the MVS was the Builders' Union and its president, Karel Tetenka. The union's third congress in November 1922, had resulted in the expulsion of the builders from the OSČ and in the subsequent decision to negotiate a merger with the MVS "within six months."³⁷ The congress also recommended that the revolutionary unions should convene a second conference to decide "definitively" on the question of the "form and organisational structure of the MVS."³⁸ The woodworkers' journal, *Dřevodělnické listy*, also entered the fray, asserting that industrial unionism could not be "jumped over," and that since it had proved impossible to amalgamate fifty-four unions (in the OSČ) into sixteen industrial unions, then "it is very hard to imagine that the same number can be concentrated into one union." It was admitted that the united all-trade union form of organisation was necessary, but only after "painstaking and systematic organisational activity," carried out according to a preconceived plan.³⁹

The second congress called for by the builders did not materialise, but on 19 January 1923 a meeting of revolutionary union representatives did take place in Prague. Tetenka spoke for his union and in the name of the wood and transport workers, who were represented by Handlř and Kořínek.⁴⁰ He opposed Hais's proposals and outlined his own plans for a "Federation of Trade Unions" (*Federace odborových svazů*), which would act as the highest organ of the Czechoslovak trade union movement. The federation would afford greater independence to member unions, whilst retaining overall guidance of tactical, organisational and agitational matters.⁴¹ Tetenka's idea was vetoed by the centralists and no further mention of it appeared in union journals or reports. By February the organisational problem was becoming a nuisance for the MVS leaders. The "free platforms" in *Rudý odborář*, which often resulted in detailed

proposals, together with the general atmosphere of tension and the lack of progress were "...hindering the practical work of the MVS." The organisational question was "not everything" and should be settled as soon as possible.⁴²

This sentiment had been expressed a few days earlier at the first ordinary congress of the KSČ. The thesis on the trade union issue called for the "most rapid" linking of MVS sections with other Red trade unions, based on a "suitable organisational form" as demanded by the second Profintern congress. Although both Hais and Rudolf Kohn, the newly-elected head of the party's trade union department, virtually ignored the problem, one delegate, Vaněk, spoke against the MVS structure, regarding it only as "an ideal for the future," whereas industrial unionism was more practicable for the present. He also noted that the party's standpoint on the organisation of trade unions had been open to a number of interpretations and thus had to be rectified by defining an "absolutely clear" policy.⁴³

The Czechs, however, were unable to reach a rapid solution to the problem, whereupon the MVS "requested" the Profintern Executive to send a representative to Czechoslovakia in order to assess the situation and proffer a remedy. Lozovsky himself was dispatched to Prague, where on 12 March 1923 he addressed a conference of MVS and independent union leaders. In an effort to compromise, he recognised that ideologically the structure of the MVS answered Czechoslovak economic conditions, but he remained sceptical about its "human material" and repeated his assertion that the union had been formed prematurely. Mutual concessions and serious consideration on the part of the MVS leaders of the problems and opinions of the independents were needed to resolve the dispute. To this end Lozovsky suggested a resolution containing several points, including the stipulation that the independent unions for the time being should remain financially and organisationally autonomous; ordinary, and not extraordinary, congresses were to be held to define their relations with the MVS; and at these union congresses, which were to convene by the end of 1924, 75 percent of all votes was required to effect a merger.⁴⁴

According to *Stavebník*, there was "complete agreement on all questions," the resolution being unanimously ratified.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the meeting decided to strengthen the independent unions "...on the

principle of industrial unions," which were to "... work in close cooperation with the MVS."⁴⁶ Hence, as early as May 1923 one can detect a preference for "close cooperation," rather than "merger" with the MVS.

Two other points of Lozovsky's resolution became the source of lasting resentment and bitterness between the builders and the MVS. Point eight stated, "the MVS is obliged not to accept into its ranks individual workers belonging to the independent unions . . .," while point ten declared that "the MVS admits only those individuals and groups which were expelled [from the OSČ] for their political or trade union activity."⁴⁷ According to a Builders' report from 1925, the MVS adhered to neither point, deliberately taking into its ranks not only individuals, but also entire groups from the independent unions, including navvies and builders' mates in Prague and brickworkers in Kolín, Dejvice and Břevnec. "In this way our union was considerably weakened."⁴⁸

The MVS chose to emphasise different aspects of the March resolution. Although the independents were to be represented on the MVS board in proportion to their memberships, the central body was to decide on all questions concerning the trade union movement, and its decision was to be binding on all organisations.⁴⁹ Moreover, it was later argued that the independents failed to fulfill point twelve of the resolution on the need for a five-member "agitation commission," which was to control, *inter alia*, the payment of dues. The first meeting of the new commission, composed of Teska (woodworkers, chairman), Nádvorník (chemical workers), Sejpka (metalworkers), Šváb (agricultural workers) and Tetenka, took place on 6 April 1923.⁵⁰ It ended in argument over the scope of its competence, Teska and Tetenka apparently demanding that it should replace the MVS as the principal organ of the Red union movement. This caused the "complete paralysis" of the commission, which "after a certain time" ceased functioning altogether.⁵¹

Despite the failure of the commission, the independent unions continued to get indirect, theoretical support from high places. For instance, the third enlarged ECCI plenum held between 12 and 23 June 1923, although not discussing specifically the Czechoslovak dilemma, issued a proclamation on the trade union question, in which it was stated that communists "... struggle to win the unions and turn them into *industrial unions*"⁵² Lozovsky endorsed this position in an article in *Stavebník* in September, declaring that as the revolutionary unions in Czechoslovakia

(as well as the communist CGTU in France) were not unified on the principle of industrial unionism, the slogan of the day should be "the reorganisation of the unions . . . on an industrial basis." He reiterated that compromise was necessary in the dispute between the MVS and the independents.⁵³

The dual nature of Moscow's position, however, was disclosed shortly after the ECCI plenum. A meeting of the Profintern Central Council called on the independent German textile workers, based in Liberec, to join the Prague section, thus forming a united section within the MVS.⁵⁴ As we have seen, Mai and Baier were adamantly opposed to the highly centralised structure of the MVS, and on this issue held similar views to Tetenka and the other Czech independents. By demanding the merger of the textile workers, albeit for internationalist rather than purely organisational reasons, the Profintern had set an ominous precedent for the future.

Throughout 1923 the general mood had been one of restrained optimism. The dispute had been kept largely behind locked doors and the union press was free from open polemic. *Stavebník* was particularly diplomatic, stressing the Builders' adherence to Profintern principles and rarely, if ever, criticising the MVS centre.⁵⁵ From January, 1924 this comradely state of affairs gradually began to change, largely because the MVS leadership became increasingly impatient with the lack of progress. Following yet another unsuccessful conference of MVS regional secretaries attended by Hais and independent union representatives on 16 and 17 January, *Rudý odborář*, commenting on the Lozovsky resolution of the previous March, complained that "certain unions insufficiently understood" its contents. The journal blamed the independents for "not dedicating enough attention" to individual points of the resolution. ". . . There still exists a tendency to delay an organisational merger with the MVS, if not to make this altogether impossible." The article went on to attack "individual functionaries" who were opposed to an amalgamation, despite the fact that workers wanted "one mass union."⁵⁶ Even then *Stavebník* was slow to respond to this changed tone. Only in mid-March did it publish an article by a Slovak unionist against a merger with the MVS, saying "some people blame Tetenka for not wishing to join the MVS. . . ."⁵⁷ One can be sure that Tetenka was indeed one of the "individual functionaries" chastised by *Rudý odborář*.

In contrast to the hardened tone manifested by the MVS, a KSČ national conference on 4 and 5 May 1924 warned against the very thing that concerned the independents, namely the over-centralisation of the MVS. Individual sections should be permitted greater freedom of movement, and "industrial organisation" was to be the order of the day.⁵⁸ The party thus followed the Profintern line, while the MVS leaders seemingly ignored it. This state of affairs, which had lasted for eighteen months since the foundation of the MVS, was to alter dramatically by the summer of 1924.

The radical departure occurred when the apparently intractable problem was taken once again to the highest authority, the third Profintern congress in Moscow in July 1924. Here Rudolf Kohn spoke directly in terms of the party's, rather than the union's, prestige in the dispute, contending that only a *direct merger* could preserve the party's stature in the eyes of the workers.⁵⁹ Perhaps wishing to minimise the differences between the KSČ and the MVS, Kohn further hinted that he was content with the organisational form of the MVS, but was willing to discuss changes, if necessary. He said that, "...sections are completely independent and the leading organs have broad freedom to establish their own line."⁶⁰ His words may have had greater impact than he intended. Lozovsky had previously set the scene by saying that Tetenka had proved that he wanted to be both financially and *politically* independent of the MVS, which could not be tolerated.⁶¹ On the contrary, the independent unions must join the central organisation.⁶²

Two developments, one general, the other specific, account for Lozovsky's change of heart. First, following the disastrous failure of the "German October" of 1923, a new hardline approach became apparent in Moscow, which tended to reinforce the defence mechanisms of many communists. Consolidation of the ranks now became paramount. Secondly, the attack on the German communist, F. Schumacher, at the fifth Comintern congress must have influenced the Profintern leadership. Schumacher was accused in effect of advocating the autonomy of the unions vis à vis the party by forming "a cartel of independent trade unions" in Berlin.⁶³ It appears that some independents, such as Tetenka and Handlíř, were approximating the heretical sins of Schumacher.

The resolution of the special Czechoslovak Commission at the Profintern congress, though not totally rejecting the need for decentralisation

in the MVS, reflected the new hardline stance. It recognised the MVS as the centre of the Red trade union movement, around which unification was to be carried out, and asserted that the union should be organised systematically and firmly on the basis of industrial sections, according to the principle "one factory—one organisation, one industrial branch—one industrial *section*!". Member sections were to receive 25 percent of union dues for their own requirements, the remainder being at the disposal of the narrow board of MVS section chairmen. The strike, unemployment and press funds were to be centrally administered, but with the knowledge of member sections. The resolution insisted that unification should be ratified by extraordinary congresses of the independent unions, which were to convene by 1 February 1925 at the latest. Finally, and most importantly, if the independents failed to comply with this directive, they were to be automatically expelled from the ranks of the Profintern.⁶⁴

Not content with this, on 19 August the Profintern Executive decreed that the Builders' Union should join the MVS as soon as possible.⁶⁵ These examples of gross interference by Moscow in Czech affairs did not, however, deter the independents. Tetenka, ignoring the pressure from Moscow, argued against the resolution, promising that it would be resisted by his members. They wanted industrial unions, "the best form of trade union organisation." Moreover, the builders feared that at least one half of the independents' membership would leave should a direct merger take place.⁶⁶ The next day, *Dělník*, over the heads of the union leaders, published an appeal to the builders and woodworkers to join the MVS. The article placed special emphasis on the need to discuss the Profintern resolution in the local branches of the independent unions in order to put pressure on the leaders to merge with the MVS. "Broad propaganda action" must be initiated to convince the independent workers of the necessity of such a step.⁶⁷

Stavebník, still pursuing its policy of restraint, refused to indulge in open polemics, but merely doubted the financial independence of MVS sections, saying "... each section should have its own apparatus for the collection of dues." If this was not introduced, the idea of greater independence would be compromised.⁶⁸ This was by no means a superficial issue. Tetenka, as we shall see later, was most concerned lest the MVS leadership interfere in, or even gain control of, the financial resources of the Builders' Union through the centralisation of the collection

of dues. The freedom to manage one's own financial affairs was pivotal in Tetenka's ideas on union organisation, and was to become a major bone of contention between him and the MVS centre.

Stavebník's persistent but subdued opposition was in stark contrast to Jaroslav Handlř's broadside in *Dřevodělnické listy*. Handlř, always a controversial figure in the labour movement, was evidently appalled by the decisions of the Profintern congress, and was not afraid to say so. "The implementation of the resolution on the form of the Red Unions would mean the *liquidation of the independent unions*." The industrial union was recognised throughout the world, including Russia, as the most advantageous form of organisation, and yet the Profintern proposed the merger of the independents with the MVS.⁶⁹ Such heresy brought forth a stern reprimand from A. Kalnin, the Organisational Secretary of the Profintern, who likened Handlř to Schumacher. Although admitting that there existed certain "antagonisms and friction" between the MVS and the independent unions, Kalnin demanded that they be eliminated so that the latter could join the MVS, even at the cost of losing some "Social Democrats" in Handlř's union.⁷⁰ In reply, Handlř firmly denied that he was a supporter of Schumacher, but did state that he would not have argued at the MVS founding congress in favour of a united organisational structure as the ultimate form of the trade union movement had he known that he would be forced into it at a later date.⁷¹

Despite this confrontation, the rift between the two sides was not so wide as to preclude renewed negotiations. These took the form of two joint meetings on 27 August and 22 September 1924. At the latter the independent union representatives put forward eight conditions for a merger. The eight points marked a toughening of resolve and realistically did not bring an amalgamation any nearer. It was stipulated that the unions were to remain autonomous and retain 25 percent of their income, the rest being transferred to the MVS centre;⁷² their administrative and organisational apparatuses were to be left untouched and under union control; the format and titles of union journals were to remain the same, and all union property was to be kept in its owners' hands until the time of the merger. Finally, all points under discussion were to be ratified by union congresses held in April 1925, not on 1 February as decreed by the Profintern.⁷³ The independents were willing, however, to make certain concessions. One point stated that they would subordinate

themselves to MVS leadership in all matters of general working class concern, such as strikes and other direct actions. Furthermore, the unions recognised the MVS as the highest organ of the Red trade union movement, an area up till then in dispute.⁷⁴

In response, the MVS elected a high-powered four-man commission composed of Hais, Sejpka, Nádvorník and Hájek (editor of *Rudý od-borář*) to establish a set of counter-proposals. These were placed before the independent unions at yet another joint conference on 8 October 1924. The principal differences centred on the degree of MVS control over the unions' financial and publishing affairs, as well as the fundamental problem of centralisation. It was proposed that the unions should retain administrative and organisational autonomy for a period of only one year starting from April, 1925. In addition, the MVS put forward the contentious idea of Moscow arbitration in the dispute and resurrected Lozovsky's notion of an agitation and propaganda commission to conduct a public press campaign on the resolution of the third Profintern congress. All these suggestions proved unacceptable to the independents, especially Tetenka. He opposed Moscow's arbitration, arguing that only his union congress was competent to decide on such wide-ranging issues, and he insisted on an independent discussion among union members to be conducted on the pages of *Stavebník*.⁷⁵ Tetenka no doubt feared MVS distortion and domination of any joint propaganda campaign. He preferred to "act on his own will," according to an MVS letter to the Profintern Executive.⁷⁶ Clearly, the stalemate was as strong as ever.

The second ordinary KSČ congress, held between 31 October and 4 November 1924, offered nothing new. The usual appeal for the unification of the Red trade unions was issued, as was the demand that the MVS should modify its statutes to ensure the necessary freedom of mobility and "fighting-capacity" of its member sections. Somewhat ominously, however, the congress resolution stated that "disciplinary measures" should be taken by the party centre against anyone who delayed the merger.⁷⁷ The party thus dutifully reiterated Profintern decisions, but offered no concrete, detailed remedies, relying on the well-tried methods of generalisation, exhortation and the iron-hand, should it prove necessary.

One result of the second congress was the increased involvement of the party leaders in the deadlock, testifying to the importance attached to the problem by the higher political authority. On 14 and 15 December

1924, a joint conference was held in Karlín with regional KSČ secretaries in attendance. At this meeting, it seems that Tetenka stubbornly defended the idea of industrial unionism, and Hais, equally mulish, brushed aside all his objections.⁷⁸ Krátký (woodworkers) delivered a telling speech, in which he said that his members could not understand why the KSČ interfered in trade union affairs without taking any responsibility for the movement. He insisted that his union's property would remain its own, but he was willing to accept the 25-75 percent ratio agreed upon by the Profintern. Having said this, he somewhat contradictorily maintained that all unions should be attached to the MVS.⁷⁹

The MVS functionaries at the conference were keen to involve party representatives in the dispute, knowing that ultimately the KSČ would put its weight behind centralism and the Profintern. Therefore they demanded the creation of a Standing Merger Committee, comprising representatives from the KSČ, MVS, independent unions and the German textile workers. The rulings of this body were to be binding on all concerned. The first, and as far as one can judge only, meeting of this Committee took place in early January 1925, with the following participants: Neurath, Šmeral, Stern, Verčák and Zápotocký (KSČ); Hais (MVS), Tetenka (Builders), Handlř (Woodworkers), Liška (Transport workers) and Baier (Liberec textile).

Yet again the discussions proved fruitless, despite the presence of the party leaders. Tetenka reportedly further complicated matters by claiming that his union could transfer only 35 percent of its dues to the MVS centre, not 75 percent, since the remainder was required for the payment of unemployment benefits as defined by the new Ghent system, which was to become law on 1 April. Handlř, on the other hand, declared himself sincerely interested in a merger and said the Woodworkers were willing to accept MVS rules, but not in a sudden, forced way. Liška stated that in his union there existed a "strong current" of opposition to the proposed amalgamation. Hais, quite wisely, was unconvinced of the sincerity of the independents and doubted that their congresses would ratify mergers, and hence returned to his earlier demand for a concerted press campaign to propagate Profintern resolutions.⁸⁰ It appears that no binding decisions were taken at this meeting, leaving the gulf between the two sides as wide as ever.

The Independent Union Congresses

This continuing gulf was plainly evident in the union press, especially on the pages of *Stavebník* and *Rudý odborář*. The former, complaining that the Profintern congress had provided no exact details on how to unify the Red Unions and on what organisational basis, urged that independence should be preserved on the principle of industrial unionism, but agreed that the forthcoming union congress should decide definitively on whether to stay independent or to become a "mere section" of the MVS.⁸¹ *Rudý odborář*, in the shape of editor Rudolf Hájek, immediately retaliated with a staunch defence of the unified MVS structure. He believed that a merger of all Red Unions within a strengthened MVS would enable communists to fight more effectively for the unification of the entire trade union movement by either defeating the reformists or by forcing their agreement.⁸²

Stavebník remained unimpressed, confident in the knowledge that a vast majority of members "cling to their independence," built up over a period of twenty-five years. "We do not wish to avoid closer links with the MVS," but this did not mean forfeiting independence by becoming a "fragmented component" of the MVS.⁸³ *Dřevodělnické listy* likewise insisted on the "maintenance of union independence," and the proposed woodworkers' congress resolution included the conditions laid down by the independents in September, 1924.⁸⁴ More specifically, the Builders were concerned about the financial state of the MVS and the amount of unemployment benefit it could afford to pay seasonal workers.⁸⁵ Hájek responded somewhat unsympathetically, saying that the independents should not worry about the question of "higher or lower benefits," but about the aim of a united organisation.⁸⁶

An article in *Rudý odborář* in mid-February 1925, offered a rare note of conciliation. While reaffirming that the MVS wanted a united body, not merely closer links with the independents, the author went on to assure the Builders that their right to "self-determination" would not be threatened within the MVS, providing organisational discipline was upheld.⁸⁷ Unfortunately, this more subtle style was the lull before the storm. With the union congresses approaching, a decision was evidently taken by the MVS leadership to pressurise the executives and members of the independent organisations into a direct merger.

The first indication of this campaign was a conference of section presidents on 21 February. It can be presumed that the MVS no longer had faith in bilateral negotiations since Tetenka, Handlř, Teska and Liška were not invited. The resolution adopted by the meeting revealed the MVS objections to the activities of the independents. It stated that whereas the MVS had adhered to Profintern instructions on the need to eliminate the fears of Tetenka and others about the strictly centralised organisational structure, the unions had "for technical reasons" postponed their congresses, set for February, until April. Moreover, they had "in opposition to the spirit of the resolution of the third R.I.L.U. congress put forward special conditions for a merger . . .", according to which the creation of a united union was replaced by the nebulous idea of a "growing nearer" (*užší sbližení*) of the two bodies within the framework of a united strike fund.⁸⁸ The conference unanimously agreed that the united union form of organisation remained the most beneficial for all workers.⁸⁹ Therefore, the MVS was determined to limit strictly the period of union autonomy and create a unified organisation, not merely a loose association. It was also resolved to postpone the already overdue MVS congress, as the decisions of the independent congresses would not be known before June 1925.⁹⁰

This meeting was followed by a short article in *Dělník* sharply critical of the Builders' conception of the merger. The author lamented that the union was not prepared to give up its independence.⁹¹ In mid-March, Hájek, who seems to have been delegated chief spokesman of the MVS, openly declared that the building workers were opposed to a merger because they believed their union would disappear or "dissolve." He denied this would happen. Only "less conscious members" feared an amalgamation, and he claimed that since the third Profintern congress Moscow had toally supported the MVS "on the basis of experience." Hájek asked whether the independents would succumb to "tradition" and conservatism, or whether they would follow the "new roads of struggle" against capital.⁹² The answer was to be provided by the union congresses.

At a pre-congress board meeting on 3 April, Tetenka decided to recommend the maintenance of union independence, and hence reject a merger with the MVS.⁹³ The congress opened on 12 April and, predictably, was the scene of heated argument and occasionally vitriolic denunciations.

Krátký, speaking for the Woodworkers, stated that when the Profintern called on the independents to join the MVS, they came to the conclusion that it was "absolutely out of the question" to give up unconditionally their independence. "Our duty is to retain what we still have." Hais, trying to minimise these fears, said, "the organisational form means nothing." Should the congress decide against a merger a large part of the workforce would leave the union. The Builders had supported the Profintern in 1922 and therefore they must submit to its directives now. Kohn, on behalf of the KSČ, stressed like Hais that unity was essential, but first he demanded unification and only then a change in the MVS statutes guaranteeing greater freedom for sections. The party was evidently fully behind the MVS.

Tetenka then took the floor to deliver a long and highly controversial speech. He agreed with Hais that 50 percent of the membership would leave, but only if the congress voted *for* a merger, not against it. A merger would thus not signify a united front, as suggested by Hais and Kohn, but would lead to greater division. Tetenka proceeded to cause a storm of protest by asserting that any split resulting from the congress would be the fault of the "political party [the KSČ] and the MVS." Kohn, as a representative of the party, wanted to break up the Builders' Union. "I say this to you plainly, face to face and I will not take a single word back." He doubted whether Kohn and Hais really cared about the unity of the trade union movement, as their methods destroyed unity. A shouting match ensued between the speaker and Hais after Tetenka had claimed that the MVS had regressed, rather than progressed, in the three years of its existence. He was also sceptical about MVS membership figures, saying the real total was more like 90,000 than 160,000. He then returned to Kohn, "the general of the Red trade union movement," whose policies led to "nothing but catastrophe."

Towards the end of his speech, Tetenka revealed the fundamental reason for his opposition to a merger:

we builders would be unable to do anything as a section . . . we would be unable to decide our own affairs, since someone else would decide for us and about us.

If the union was split, its property would be confiscated and the builders would be left penniless. He therefore urged the congress to maintain

independence, although a certain percentage of union funds could be contributed to MVS work and agitation. This concession in itself was remarkable when one considers the fact that since November 1922, the MVS had owed the Builders' Union 30,000 crowns. Tetenka informed the congress that an MVS secretary, Novák, had requested the money in order to pay the December salaries of union employees.⁹⁴ The sum had still not been repaid by August, 1926.⁹⁵

Despite Tetenka's passionate plea for independence, the vote was very close: 9,430 in favour of retaining independence, 8,290 in favour of a merger.⁹⁶ An MVS report claimed later that thirty-five delegates were behind a merger and "only" thirty-four against with one abstention. The two-thirds majority (46) required to dissolve the union was far from achieved. As Hais had done at the congress, so the report bemoaned the "vehement propaganda" campaign launched by Tetenka and *Stavebník* against an amalgamation.

In spite of this, Tetenka's position at the congress was very insecure and he had to expend great efforts in order to obtain a majority

The congress resolution stated that an industrial union of building workers was the most perfect organisational form, a union:

*. . . whose leadership should not be subordinated to this or that political party, but should manage its own affairs independently for the benefit of union members.*⁹⁷

It is clear then that the builders based their resistance to a merger on both trade union and political considerations. They refused to sacrifice their autonomy not only to the MVS, but also to the Communist Party, fearing political, administrative and financial domination.

The Transport workers' congress, held from 12 to 13 April 1925 was less forthright in its opposition. The resolution called for the renewal of negotiations, but only on the basis of the conditions made the previous September, which were "most emphatically" defended.⁹⁸ Similarly, the Woodworkers' congress, which met as late as 31 May to 1 June, decided to restart negotiations with the MVS based on the September

conditions and the resolution of the third Profintern congress.⁹⁹ Although these two rulings were more conciliatory than the Builders' congress, in practice they were to have the same result, since the September conditions had been condemned as inoperable by the MVS. Notwithstanding this outcome of the independent union congresses, all three unions were deeply divided over the merger issue, some leaders and members being more sympathetic to the idea than others. For instance, according to the minutes of the Builders' Union board meetings, groups in Klatovy, Mladá Boleslav, Ústí nad Labem, Tábor and the Prague districts of Prosek, Vršovice, Žižkov, Smíchov and districts I and VIII opposed Tetenka's leadership and some were keen to join the MVS.¹⁰⁰ *Dřevodělnické listy* too reported that "one part of the delegates" wished to merge with Hais.¹⁰¹

If the independents were bitterly divided, the Profintern Executive was totally unanimous in its response to the congress resolutions. Immediately after the Woodworkers' conference, the Executive held two meetings, both of which outrightly attacked the independents for not reflecting "...the real will of the majority of members," and for disseminating deliberate misinformation.¹⁰² The second of these meetings on 6 June was instrumental in widening still further the gap between the MVS and the independents, and as such can be seen as another example of direct interference in Czech affairs. Moscow ordered the independents to organise a referendum of all members on the proposed merger to be started by 31 July and completed by 31 October at the latest.¹⁰³ This directive was firmly rejected. On 23 June, the Builders' Union board refused to implement the demands, arguing that the board and union congress were the sole arbiters on such issues.¹⁰⁴ The decree was "an open and obvious attack on the unity and strength of our unions" in the form of an "ultimatum." It was wrong to claim that the congress did not represent the will of the membership, as all union activity was executed on the basis of "proletarian democracy."¹⁰⁵ The Woodworkers adopted a similar stance. A board meeting on 8 July decided, with only one vote against, to reject the referendum because it would bring about a new "fratricidal struggle" within the union.¹⁰⁶

The Battle for Control of the Builders' Union

The battle for the hearts and minds of the independent union members now entered a more bitter, mutually antagonistic stage. Condemnations and denunciations proliferated in the press, nowhere more so than in *Rudé právo*, which up till then had kept a relatively low profile in the dispute. In early August, the KSČ daily carried a biting attack not only on Tetenka, but also Teska and Krátký. It was alleged that,

...the independent union leadership had for a whole year passionately agitated against unification with the MVS, whilst cautiously remaining silent about the negotiations for unification with the OSČ.

Tetenka and Teska were concocting a "devilish plan" to lead their members back into the arms of the reformists. *Rudé právo* then called on all "conscious" members to form communist fractions and to agitate among other workers against the anti-revolutionary plans. The article concluded with an appeal to the membership: "Demand voting in all groups on entrance into the MVS as decided by the R.I.L.U."¹⁰⁷

A series of vitriolic attacks followed linking Tetenka and Teska to Josef Bubník, the right-wing "opportunist" who had been expelled from the party six months earlier.¹⁰⁸ Both Tetenka and Teska suffered the same fate in the late summer of 1925, the latter joining Bubník's "Independent Communist Party."¹⁰⁹ Hájek deplored the unions' "unheard-of attacks on the RILU and MVS . . .," which demonstrated that they "...do not understand and do not wish to understand . . . the demands of proletarian discipline."¹¹⁰ *Dělník* reported that a meeting of Prague builders on 16 August had rebuked Tetenka personally as a supporter of the bourgeoisie, who had "...crossed over into the camp of our enemies." A similar movement against Teska had started in the Woodworkers' Union.¹¹¹ The third KSČ congress in September likewise denounced them as "Bubníkites" and helpers of the bourgeoisie.¹¹² A few months later Moscow added its voice to the chorus, branding them "real reformists."¹¹³ *Stavebník* countered with several articles criticising both KSČ and MVS tactics and the Profintern for attempting to "impose" its policies on the Builders' Union. Kohn and particularly Hájek came

in for severe treatment for representing party interference in union affairs.

The party leadership does not see and does not want to see that it cannot unconditionally command those areas where in reality it has no influence.¹¹⁴

On 16 August the board of the Builders' Union passed a resolution by nine votes to five condemning the splitting tactics of the KSČ and MVS, attacking Kohn and labelling the united front "an absolute comedy." The resolution concluded with the words:

we do not consider it beneficial to become a section of the MVS, since this can in no way help us in our union struggles, especially as we have not gained any advantage whatsoever from our partnership with the MVS.¹¹⁵

It was also asserted that soon after the April congress, opposition board members, "on the orders of the Politburo" (of the KSČ), began to attend secret meetings arranged by Kohn. For his part, Hais "bombarded" the union centre and local groups with leaflets agitating for an extraordinary congress and for branch meetings to discuss the situation. At these gatherings pro-MVS speakers tried to "blacken" the union in the eyes of the workers. This campaign culminated in the creation of a party cell directly in the union board around Novák and Bouzek, established by Kohn and the Politburo.¹¹⁶

In September, Tetenka announced that he was not afraid to expel "whole groups" if necessary, and in late 1925 and early 1926 various local union branches were dissolved, namely Žižkov, Smíchov and Vršovice. In October and November, Matějovský, Bouzek, Zet, Soukup and Zíka among others. The immediate cause of their dismissal was the fact that they had attended an extraordinary board meeting on 12 October at the KSČ secretariat, at which they expressed willingness to work "fractionally" within the board, i.e. in the interests of the Communist Party.¹¹⁷ The split in the Builders' Union was by now almost complete.

The logical outcome of Tetenka's disillusionment with the MVS and KSČ was a tentative effort to form closer relations with the OSČ. The

first "informal" negotiations took place on 11 September, 1925, at the behest of the OSČ.¹¹⁸ The independents were represented by Handlř, Krátký and Tetenka, and the OSČ by Hampl, Kadlec and Brašek. *Stavebník* saw the aim as the creation of a "united front of building workers," whereas Hampl particularly insisted on organisational unity within the framework of the OSČ. This idea was opposed by the Woodworkers (in less than "reformist" manner, one might add), who demanded that unification should be decided upon at special "merger congresses." This in turn was rejected by the OSČ delegates.¹¹⁹ Hence, it was evident that negotiations would be protracted and difficult, and that there was to be no straight road "back to reformism" for the independents.

It must be borne in mind that the MVS, backed by the KSČ and Profintern, was preparing for a struggle to win over independent union members. To this end, the second MVS congress in late January 1926, aimed to eliminate some of their fears and create an atmosphere more conducive to unification. The official Profintern communiqué to the congress, dated 26 November 1925, although emphasising that "all revolutionary unions must be linked in a united centre," stated clearly that sections should be autonomous, elect their own leading organs and not be subject to direct control from above by means of the appointment of secretaries. Sections should be organised on the principle of industrial unions and should have the broadest freedom of manoeuvre. Therefore, Profintern demanded a revision of the MVS statutes in favour of greater decentralisation.¹²⁰ If Moscow was sincere, it was ironically closer to Tetenka and Teska, the "real reformists," than to Hais.

Prominent KSČ figures added their voice to the decentralisation drive. At a conference of section leaders on 20 December, Zápotocký pointed out certain, unspecified "deficiencies and incorrect opinions" in the MVS campaign for unity.¹²¹ It appears that the question of financial self-management, or rather lack of it, was one of these "deficiencies." Kohn at the third KSČ congress had called for "greater independence of action" for member sections. The adopted resolution demanded that the MVS should amend its statutes at the forthcoming union congress in order to encourage the unification of the revolutionary trade union movement.¹²²

Hence, the second MVS congress promised a lot, but delivered little. The expected changes in the statutes resulted merely in the formal recognition

that sections should receive 25 percent of their dues for independent use, but the centralised system of collecting dues was to remain unaltered. Should this amount prove insufficient for some sections, the stronger and wealthier ones had to help the weaker.¹²³ Far from advocating decentralisation measures, a majority of speakers and sections were in favour of the existing centralised structure.¹²⁴ Hais did his utmost to justify his leadership's policies by evoking Profintern recognition of the MVS, saying, "I announce in the name of the old board, in the name of the MVS, that we are carrying out this resolution [of the third Profintern congress]"¹²⁵ By emphasising Moscow's support for the MVS, Hais outmanoeuvred his opponents in the Red Unions and KSČ, giving the impression that he and his colleagues were patiently executing Profintern's will. Indeed, its representative, Reinhardt, expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the congress, which he felt brought unification a step nearer.¹²⁶

It is never easy to determine the real motives of the Moscow Internationals. This is a problem faced by all scholars of the international communist movement. In this case, it is extremely difficult to ascertain whether Moscow and the KSČ were sincere in demanding significant changes in the MVS statutes. If they were, the Hais leadership was sufficiently powerful and independent to ignore virtually all their demands. This is a possibility. It seems more likely that although the Profintern was dissatisfied with the highly centralised structure of the MVS, *at that time*, i.e. following the breach with the Builders' Union, Moscow was more concerned with forcing the unification of the Red Unions than with pressuring a reluctant Hais into making major alterations. These could wait until after unification. Viewed in this way, the demands in the Profintern communiqué seem largely propagandistic, designed to attract the support of independent unionists.

If indeed this was the aim, it was unsuccessful. The MVS congress did little or nothing to encourage the unification of the Red trade union movement. Handlř and Liška expressed their unions' willingness to discuss the merger issue, but neither, especially the latter, appeared over-enthusiastic.¹²⁷ By this time there was no hope of involving Tetenka and his supporters in the Builders' Union. The Woodworkers did hold joint negotiations with the MVS on 30 June 1926, but despite the somewhat misleading headline in *Dřevodělnické listy*, "Agreement between

the Union of Woodworkers and the MVS," no firm decision on amalgamation was concluded.¹²⁸ In fact, it was never concluded. The Woodworkers remained an independent union throughout the 1920s, joining neither the MVS nor the OSČ.¹²⁹ The same was true of the Transport workers, although both were closer to the MVS in ideological outlook.

The Union of Builders suffered a vastly different fate. With the union already deeply split by the end of 1925, and with a seemingly interminable series of mutual attacks in the press throughout 1926, all hope of reunification was abandoned. Tetenka continued to negotiate with the OSČ and after two years of effort unification finally took place on 1 July 1928, following merger congresses in the March of that year. The German Social Democratic Builders' Union was included in the agreement.¹³⁰ The membership of the OSČ union was 15,519 by the end of 1928, an increase of almost 9,000 on the previous year.¹³¹ A Builders' report from 1927 claimed that the membership of the pro-Tetenka union was 5,549 at the end of 1926.¹³² The pro-MVS builders held an extraordinary congress on 18 July 1926, which predictably resolved to join the MVS as a builders' section. Tetenka was expelled and replaced by Matějovský as president. At the congress, it was reported that 105 delegates represented 6,897 members, supported by 3,500 stoneworkers.¹³³ The new section claimed 11,363 members by the end of 1926, rising to 20,115 by 1928.¹³⁴ This figure was contested by Tetenka, whose union reckoned that the MVS section had little more than 4,000 members.¹³⁵ Whatever the truth may be, and it is difficult to calculate membership figures with any degree of certainty, it appears that of the 19,306 members of the Union of Builders in 1924, approximately one third stayed loyal to Tetenka, one third joined the MVS and one third became non-unionised.¹³⁶

The ultimate result of the organisational problems within the Red trade union movement in the period 1922-1926 was the acrimonious break-up of yet another union, the Builders, and the continued independence of two other organisations, the Woodworkers' and Transport workers' unions. The merger of the German textile workers with the central Prague section marked the only success, but even this was an uneasy relationship. Hais weakened the Red trade union movement by his intransigence and reluctance to decentralise the MVS organisational structure. He demanded unity, but on his terms. Why did the MVS leaders

insist on a total merger with the independents and reject the idea of "closer cooperation?"

First, in communist theory trade union movements had to be strictly centralised in order to unite the working class in its struggle against capital. Many Comintern and Profintern manifestoes, resolutions and directives in the 1920s emphasised the necessity of centralisation and unification.¹³⁷ Thus, in Czechoslovakia, where the trade union movement was highly fragmented, the need for a unified, communist union organisation presupposed the merger of *all* revolutionary-oriented unions.¹³⁸ Only then could the influence of the reformists be combatted in the factories, workshops and mines. The MVS leaders could not tolerate a situation whereby approximately 35,000 workers, whose leaderships had expressed themselves in favour of Profintern methods, remained outside the communist trade union centre. This feeling became most acute after the third Profintern congress in July 1924 had formally recognised the MVS and forcefully demanded the rapid merger of the Red Unions. From then on increasing pressure was put on the independents, which in turn led only to further splits.

Secondly, if the MVS was to attract non-unionised, apathetic, and reformist workers into its ranks, it had to present a united, harmonious face. Internal discord benefited neither the recruitment drives nor the united front tactic. At the second MVS congress, Šrámek reflected the former concern when he said, "if the masses see the independents join the MVS and the Red Unions are united, then we will gain new members."¹³⁹ Kohn, speaking at the Builders' congress in April 1925, observed that,

it is impossible that we should have such a split in the revolutionary trade union movement if we want to proclaim a united front of the entire workers' trade union movement.

He said further that should a merger not take place, then communists had no "moral legitimacy" to talk to the reformists about the unification of the whole labour movement.¹⁴⁰ Clearly, a merger would have given fresh impetus to the policies of the KSČ and MVS on both these fronts.

A third, and most significant, element was the question of the property and financial resources that could have accrued to the MVS in the

event of an amalgamation. This was of particular relevance given the poor financial state of the union throughout the 1920s.¹⁴¹ As we have seen, the MVS owed the Builders' Union at least 30,000 crowns.¹⁴²

Therefore the possibility of giving access to 75 percent of its membership dues must have been crucial in Hais's thinking. The Builders' report of 1925 hinted at this, complaining that much greater pressure was exerted on them to merge than on the smaller and financially weaker Woodworkers and Transport workers.¹⁴³

Finally, one should not ignore the personal elements in the dispute. Hais may have desired complete centralisation in order to further his own personal prestige and power and that of his union, the Chemical workers, which formed the organisational basis of the MVS. The enmity between him and Tetenka, Teska and Handlíř, as well as between the latter and Rudolf Kohn, which appears to have been particularly acute, no doubt had its roots in ideological and practical disagreements, but a clash of personalities was quite evident and exacerbated these differences.¹⁴⁴ Hais's ego would have been considerably boosted had he managed to attract the vast majority of builders to the MVS against Tetenka's will.

The opposite remains true for Tetenka, although obviously there were several fundamental reasons why he and the other independent leaders opposed a merger with the MVS. Tetenka, Teska, Handlíř, Krátký and Liška were all, to a greater or lesser extent, united in wishing to retain as much union autonomy and freedom of action as possible. Tetenka, first and foremost, insisted that this independence, gained over twenty-five years of union activity was not to be forfeited. Moreover, the independents were adamant that they should keep control of the administrative, financial and publishing affairs of their organisations, and that union property should remain firmly in their hands. All this, they felt, would be threatened by a merger.¹⁴⁵

Ideological factors also played an increasingly important role in the mid-1920s. The involvement of the KSČ in the shape of Kohn, the head of the party's trade union department, aroused bitter resistance among the independents. Kohn, more than Hais and Hájek, was attacked for executing the party's orders and for bringing disruption into the trade union movement. *Stavebník* asked, who is this Kohn, who elected him, who pays him and to whom as he responsible?¹⁴⁶ Fundamentally, however, the problem was not Kohn, but what he represented: party interference

in a hitherto sovereign field, the trade union movement. This was the crux of the issue. At bottom, the independent leaders consistently vetoed a merger because they were highly sceptical of the undemocratic relationship between the party and unions. In my opinion, the most heretical act of Tetenka and Teska was to criticise and expose publicly the role of the KSČ in the Red trade union movement.

The dispute over the organisational structure of the MVS also sheds light on the complexities of the relationship between the Czech Red unionists and the Moscow Internationals. The MVS, as a section of the Red International of Labour Unions, was formally bound by the rules of that organisation to carry out all directives and decrees. In reality, the Hais leadership rarely complied. The recalcitrance of the Czechs was nowhere more evident than at the second Profintern congress in November 1922. Here, Hais and the majority of the MVS delegation rebuffed Lozovsky's ideas on industrial unionism, arguing that in Czechoslovak conditions a strictly centralised form of organisation was essential. In short, Hais refused to buckle under, and what is more he chose to defy Lozovsky at the highest forum, the world congress in Moscow. For the next twenty months the MVS, while playing lip service to decentralisation, was able in practice to reject it. After July 1924 the situation altered. But it was not the Czechs who yielded. Moscow changed *its* line, insisting on a merger of the independents with the MVS. Only then would decentralisation measures be undertaken. Hais now found himself closer to the Profintern leadership, amendments to the MVS statutes taking second place to the need for unity. Even though this signified a belated convergence of interests between Moscow and Prague, we can conclude that throughout the period 1922-1926 the Profintern Executive remained powerless to enforce its will on the MVS. This was not to be an isolated case.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE UNITED FRONT

The question of what attitude to adopt towards OSČ trade unions was of crucial significance for the further development of the MVS after its formation in October, 1922. Guidelines for the relationship between Communist and Social Democratic unions were embodied in the united front tactic, as defined by the Comintern and Profintern. This tactic was primarily concerned with initiating and leading working class action "from below," that is joint action with Social Democratic workers aimed at exposing the reformist policies of union leaders, and at converting a majority of members to the communist cause. The united front "from above," involving direct liaison between Communist and Social Democratic union leaders, was also possible in certain circumstances. In Czechoslovakia communists attempted to pursue both alternatives. In the first case, the belligerent application of the united front from below in 1923 resulted in an acrimonious split in the OSČ Union of Miners, and in the second, the united front from above led in early 1925 to merger negotiations between the two respective metalworker organisations. It is argued that in neither instance was the united front tactic a notable success.

The United Front From Below: The Split in the Union of Miners

The crisis in the Union of Miners cannot be divorced from the general process of ideological differentiation in the OSČ as it developed in 1921

and 1922. At the union's fifth congress in October 1921 Macák, the Kladno area secretary, stated that his members were directly opposed to the political activity and voting of Karel Brožík, the General Secretary of the Union and SDP deputy in the National Assembly. According to *Rudé právo*, other mining districts were split 50-50 on this issue. Although a majority of union members were communists, claimed the KSČ daily, the union board was composed largely of Brožík supporters.¹

The miners' strike of February 1922 exacerbated these differences and laid the foundations of a potential fratricidal conflict between communists and Social Democrats.² The Union of Miners' weekly, *Na zdar*, described the year 1922 as one of great hardships for mining communities. The coal crisis led to a drop in production and wages were slashed by as much as 30 percent, a reduction surpassed only in the metal and certain sectors of the chemical industries.³ Despite the economic depression, the lower standard of living and the mutual press attacks, the splits which occurred in 1922 in several other major industries were largely avoided in the miners' union. Such disruption as did occur was on a smaller scale, apart from in the Ostrava-Karviná coalfield, the largest in the republic, where the local union leaders were "forced" to divide the organisation into three sections in August 1922: a Social Democratic in Moravská Ostrava, a Communist in Orlov and a Polish in Karviná. Although this move can be seen as the basis of a more permanent division, the union as a whole remained united.⁴ Even so revolutionary miners organised their own separate branch meetings, at which members were encouraged to stop payment of union dues.⁵ Furthermore, it was alleged that from October 1922 communists "worked systematically" for a split in the union by preparing the mass transfer of members from OSČ organisations to the MVS. This activity proved successful only in the Most-Chomutov-Teplice brown coal region in north Bohemia where a "small part [of the membership] joined the Chemical Workers' Union," and subsequently the MVS.⁶

Thus, unlike in the chemical, textile, metal, wood and building unions, no mass communist miners' organisation was formed in October 1922.⁷ This can be explained by the fact that the leadership of the Union of Miners was almost exclusively in the hands of Social Democrats, and more importantly, the strong sense of unity, felt even in the radical bastion of Kladno, militated against attempts to found new organisations and made

the union executive reluctant to expel oppositionists.⁸ On the other hand, once the MVS had been established as a body representing the Czechoslovak working class the desire to form a mass miners' section must have been uppermost in the mind of communist leaders. No union centre could claim to represent the proletariat without the support of the miners. The creation of a miners' section, however, could only be effected within the bounds of the united front tactics. In their public pronouncements, the Comintern and Profintern insisted on work *inside* reformist unions so that communists should not become isolated from the mass of Social Democratic workers. In Czechoslovakia, communists were directed to remain in those reformist unions which had not been split in order to radicalise the membership. The immediate transfer of revolutionary workers from OSČ unions to the MVS, a policy forcefully propounded by the Hais leadership, was strictly forbidden by both Moscow and the KSČ.⁹

The trade union resolution adopted by the first party congress in February 1923 stated clearly that communists must remain in reformist organisations and prepare to win over the masses.¹⁰ The aim in the miners' union was to capture a majority of members by means of detailed and persistent propaganda and agitational work within the union apparatus. In other words, the party, or more accurately Kohn's trade union department, demanded that the MVS adhere to the Comintern tactic of the united front from below.¹¹

From early 1923 these tactics were applied with greatest urgency in the vital Ostrava-Karviná field. With Kladno solidly communist and a small section already established in north Bohemia, the major task was to attract majority support from the Moravian and Silesian miners, a minority of whom were of Polish origin. As we have seen, the local OSČ union had been divided into three sections, which by the end of 1922 had the following memberships: the Czech section 19,990 members, the Communist 8,000 and the Polish 5,432. The regional union organised 33,422 miners, which represented a little over 50 percent of the total union membership of 65,207.¹² It is clear from these figures why the KSČ and MVS considered it imperative to gain a strong foothold among the miners of this area. Once the Ostrava men had been "won over" for revolutionary methods the example would be set for the rest of the membership in other coalfields.

Social Democratic sources document various instances of what was termed "the disruptive activity of the communists" in Ostrava-Karviná during 1923. As early as January, the secretary of the communist section was expelled from the union for fraud and "roguish behavior."¹³ At a conference of coalition unions on 24 March, Pohl, the leader of the German Social Democratic miners, condemned the KSČ, saying it was attempting to break the unity of the workers merely for the prestige of the party.¹⁴ An article by Brožík reiterated these accusations and asserted that a meeting of communist functionaries at Petřvald on 31 March adopted a resolution calling on all communist members to agitate for an extraordinary union congress, despite the fact that the leadership had rejected this in December, 1922. Significantly, Brožík claimed that the resolution was ratified "in the name of the Executive Committee of the KSČ," and especially its trade union department. Indeed, Kohn addressed the meeting and Brožík emphasised that it was the party and not the "passive" MVS which had taken over the struggle against the union.¹⁵

Another example of communist malpractice was the elections to the Regional Council (*Revírní rada*). Communist leaders in Ostrava insisted on receiving half the seats even though their numerical and voting strength did not warrant such a high proportion. No agreement was forthcoming, whereupon the communist miners announced their own independent candidate list, as did the Poles. Therefore, in a supposedly united union, three lists were presented to the voting miners. According to the union, the plan backfired, the communists winning less mandates than they had previously been offered during negotiations with Social Democratic officials.¹⁶ On the other hand, *Rudé právo*, under the title "Red Ostrava," contended that the MVS had been successful in the area owing to faction work. The local Red trade union council had 26,231 members at the end of 1922, 16,401 of whom were miners.¹⁷ This contrasts markedly with the figures cited above and with those given by Vojtěch Brda, the OSČ miners' secretary in Ostrava, who calculated that the communist section had only 7,930 members at the end of March, 1923, compared to 12,841 in the Czech section and 5,096 in the Polish.¹⁸

In April, 1923, *Rudé právo* printed several attacks on the leadership of the Union of Miners, branding Brožík a "cell" of the bourgeoisie among the workers.¹⁹ The union leaders were conducting "an offensive against the communists" and an "open fight" against all opposition

members, arguing that supporters of the Profintern could no longer remain in the OSČ. In response, revolutionary miners were urged to ensure that union groups were led by reliable communists, particularly outside the Kladno area.²⁰ One can interpret this appeal as an initial step towards capturing control of the union by an assault on the middle levels of the administration in the local branches. Communist agitation did score some successes. It was reported that in May, 1923, a majority of miners' delegates at a conference in Rosice (Moravia) gave priority to Communist Party, rather than trade union, discipline.²¹

Moreover, the situation in Ostrava deteriorated in early June. The local OSČ officials began to prepare for the eventuality of a split by issuing a new set of "Organisational Rules" to be binding on all three sections. Members were informed that anyone who failed to submit to the Rules and the decisions of the union board and congress would be expelled from the organisation. A member of the Union of Miners could not simultaneously be a member of any other trade union organisation, corporation or council that was not affiliated to the OSČ.²² This was clear warning to communist miners, demonstrating that the union leaders were not afraid to expel refractory members. Indeed, the memory of 1922 was still firmly in mind, as an article in *Na zdar* proved. It stated that the aim of "communist agitation" in 1922 was not to strengthen the trade union movement, but to set up an independent union centre.²³ This hardline Social Democratic approach was matched by the KSČ. Kohn, speaking at an all-trade union conference in June, demanded the intensification of communist fraction work in unions, the task being to gain new members for the MVS from the ranks of the non-unionised.²⁴ Fraction work, which had been neglected by communist trade unionists according to Kohn and the leftist Doležal, was the only way that communists could influence the membership, since the reformists held the apparatus in their hands. As Kohn admitted, the aim was to exert political influence on the workers.²⁵

A perfect opportunity to implement this aim came in the late summer of 1923 with the miners' general strike. As early as April, *Na zdar* had accused the communist press of wanting a general strike to serve the political ends of the KSČ and to break the unity of the miners' union.²⁶ The strike of 120,000 miners throughout the republic finally broke out on 20 August and ended on 6 October.²⁷ It was to be the catalyst that brought about the split.

The dispute began after the employers had originally demanded a 30 percent cut in wages, later reduced to 18 percent. Protracted negotiations between the coalition unions and the coal barons finally agreed on a 9 to 13 percent reduction depending on the area. It is most significant that the Ostrava-Karviná field suffered the heftiest cut of 13 percent, whereas Rosice, Plzeň, Žacléř (12 percent), Most-Chomutov-Teplice (10 percent) and Kladno-Slany (9 percent) fared better.²⁸ The resultant lower standard of living for miners, particularly in Ostrava, coming on top of the wage cuts already endured in 1922, radicalised many union members and were an important contributory factor in the organisational rift that followed. Communist agitation increased this sense of hardship and directed it against the Social Democratic union leaders. Communist tactics immediately before, during and after the strike varied greatly, ranging from passionate pleas for unity to outright condemnations of the reformist "betrayers" of the working class.

In late July, *Dělník* foresaw the likelihood of a strike in Ostrava and appealed to all other coalmining areas for support.²⁹ On the eve of the strike, however, the same journal launched a scathing attack on the Union of Miners for its alleged unwillingness to lead a wage struggle. The leaders were merely concerned with preserving "class collaboration."³⁰ *Rudé právo* placed great emphasis on the need for a fighting united front of all unions, culminating on 11 September when the KSČ and MVS issued a joint call for a "general strike of all workers in Czechoslovakia."³¹ This campaign for working class solidarity was occasionally interspersed with attacks on the SDP and its organ, *Právo lidu*, but on the whole mutual polemics were kept to a minimum during the seven week dispute.³² Neither *Dělník* nor *Na zdar* engaged in open attacks and solidarity was achieved, at least on the surface. Moscow did little to foster the spirit of the united front, even though it was the official policy of the Comintern. Midway through the strike, the Comintern organ, *Inprecorr*, declared that the reformists had adopted "anti-working class policies" and concluded "...on this occasion the reformist trade union leaders will again do their utmost to bring about the defeat of the workers."³³ Hence, at a time when the Czech communists were striving to forge a united front, albeit most likely on a propagandistic level, the Comintern published an inflammatory article against the OSČ union leaders. It is possible that the call for united action was a mere manoeuvre and that

the Comintern had in advance determined the line to be followed by the KSČ and MVS. If so, Moscow was deliberately adding fuel to the flames.

On the domestic scene, direct communist influence on the course of the negotiations was strictly limited. MVS representatives were permitted to attend joint union meetings only on 27 September, a little over one week before the end of the dispute.³⁴ Two communists, Herink (Kladno) and Lizák (Ostrava), were members of the nine-man Central Strike Committee which negotiated with the employers, but their proposals and suggestions were regularly vetoed by the coalition delegates.³⁵ Indeed, both *Rudé právo* and *Dělník* recognised that the strike was in the hands of the reformists, a fact which facilitated the campaign against them after the strike.³⁶ The appeals for a united front made during the dispute and the efforts to extend the struggle to other regions and industries met with little response. The KSČ opposed the compromise formula worked out by the coalition negotiators, claiming that the workers wanted to broaden the strike.³⁷ Despite this, on 6 October delegates from every mining area voted 62 to 9 to accept the 9 to 13 percent cuts.³⁸ *Na zdar* admitted that strike action had not prevented lower wages, but neither had the owners achieved their original demands. The outcome was described as "neither victory, nor defeat."³⁹ The termination of the dispute marked the start of a bitter conflict within the Union of Miners, centred on the Ostrava region. It ended in the mass transfer of miners to the MVS section in late November and early December.

The clash was preceded by a bizarre incident in Ostrava. Vojtěch Brda, the rightist union secretary, and several other leading local officials were assaulted as they entered the railway station by a gang of twenty youths carrying clubs and stones. The youths, chanting "kill Brda and hang the secretaries!," sported KSČ badges and emblems. One functionary, Chrobák, was injured under the eye by a sharp object before police dispersed the attackers. An OSČ union report later alleged that the "violent assault" was perpetrated on the orders of the communist section "with the cooperation of the regional trade union council of Moscow unions."⁴⁰ The incident may have been no more than misdirected youthful exuberance, but it epitomised how far the gulf between the Social Democrats and communists in the Ostrava district had widened, and naturally did nothing to help heal the breach.

The communist press lost no time in launching a more organised attack on the union itself. *Rudý odborář* led the charge blaming the defeat of the strike on "vacillating and indecisive leadership," and criticising *Na zdar* for its anti-communist stance which had caused the break-up of the united front.⁴¹ This criticism was largely unfounded as *Na zdar* had refrained from open polemic during the strike. The official party position stressed organisational unity, but tempered this with a demand for a "clean-out" of "harmful reformist influences" in the trade unions. At a meeting on 11 October, the Executive Committee decided to initiate a campaign to "extricate" miners' organisations from the reformist leadership.⁴² The MVS went even further by issuing an appeal for the strengthening of its miners' section, which in reality could only mean a transfer from the OSČ union.⁴³ The KSČ organ in Ostrava, *Dělnický deník*, made no mention of the call for a purge, merely emphasising the need for unity and party discipline. Individuals and local organisations were expressly forbidden to act independently.⁴⁴ Some Social Democrats had no illusions as to communist tactics. Brda claimed that the KSČ intended to split the union movement. Communist actions were not directed against the capitalists, but against the SDP and the OSČ.⁴⁵

The struggle was taken a stage further on 23 October with the publication of a joint KSČ-MVS appeal entitled "To all workers in Czechoslovakia!" The appeal centred firstly on the need for solidarity with the uprising in Germany, but then became a veiled plea for a split in the Union of Miners. It was confidently asserted that since the defeat of the general strike, "*thousands of miners are applying to join the MVS miners' section.*" However, as communists had never wanted to split trade union organisations, merely to revolutionise them,

... we turn to you, miners, at this historic moment with this direct appeal... remain in the union in which you are organised. We do not urge you to join the MVS!

Having said this, the article then incited miners to carry out a struggle for the reorganisation of the entire union leadership. "Unreliable elements" had to be purged not only in the central administration, but also in all district and regional branches. Social Democratic workers had to be convinced of the "opportunistic tactics" of their leaders.⁴⁶ The relevance

of this appeal lay in the fact that although it overtly rejected a direct transfer of communist miners to the MVS, the exhortation to revolutionise the union leadership represented a covert attempt to do just this, since the communists were well aware that the union would be forced to expel those who refused to abide by board decisions. The plan was cleverly devised to kill two birds with one stone: to place the blame for the split on the Social Democrats, which was most important, while at the same time "indirectly" creating a mass miners' section.

One major problem for the left was that communist unionists were not united on the question of immediate tactics. Some, like Josef Pergl, the radical from Ostrava, and Hais himself apparently demanded an open, mass transfer. Others based around the powerful Kladno area stood against this idea, determined to preserve organisational unity until such time as the communists had majority support. According to OSČ sources, this rupture was only partially patched up at a conference of opposition miners towards the end of October, which came out in support of the Kladno position.⁴⁷ The Ostrava miners refused to submit to the ruling and, either on their own initiative or more likely with the backing of radicals in the KSČ and MVS, disseminated a leaflet on 26 October instructing miners to join the MVS *en masse*. The slogan of the day was "not a haler to the reformist unions, everything for the MVS!"⁴⁸ The pamphlet was not reprinted in any communist paper, as the MVS denied all knowledge of its existence. Indeed, Hais and Sejpka in an official statement categorically rejected the notion of the involvement of their organisation, and *Rudé právo* considered the whole affair a reformist "fraud," designed to spread confusion in the miners' ranks.⁴⁹

In an article published in December, Brožík stated that the leaflet forced the union board to drop its "tolerant" attitude and issue a resolution *On the Disruptive Activity in the Ostrava-Karviná Coalfield*.⁵⁰ The proclamation, dated 1 November, declared that "communist elements" had over a long period of time attacked the union and its leadership. These "divisive actions," which were "supported by the political press of the Communist Party," had reached such proportions, culminating in the release of the "shameful" leaflet, that no organisational work was possible. Therefore, the board decided that all union groups in the area should vote on whether to accept the following conditions: to fulfill all board rulings, and to abide by union and OSČ congress decisions;

to agree that no union group could be a member of another trade union commission or corporation; and most importantly, to acknowledge that the methods and agitation of the Third Moscow International were harmful and had to be condemned. If voting had not taken place by the end of November, the group was "considered to have left the union."⁵¹

Following the publication of this resolution, the communist press began to accuse the Social Democrats of splitting the union. Even before, *Rudé právo* had claimed that they were endeavouring to force communists to leave.⁵² In early November, the headlines read, "Social Democrats Split Miners' Unity. Deception and Provocation of Ostrava Social Democrats."⁵³ Another article maintained that the "putsch" was ordered by the Executive Committee of the SDP.⁵⁴ *Dělník* talked of a "purge" by Brožík and other "opportunist" leaders, and *Rudý odborář* accused Brda of instigating the split.⁵⁵ Kohn penned a long article for *Rudé právo* arguing that the MVS leaders had turned down the appeals of communist unionists to join the Red Unions in deference to the directives of the Profintern and the KSČ. Miners wanted to join the MVS and it was difficult to persuade them that their duty was to remain in the reformist union. Kohn concluded "we do not wish to take the responsibility for a split in any union. . . ."⁵⁶ He revealed here the communists' concern to attach blame for the schism to the OSČ union leaders, thus further alienating them in the eyes of the workers.

By autumn 1923, most Social Democratic miners' leaders felt no compunction about sacrificing the communists in their ranks. Their loss was seen as no great hardship. Brda in particular seemed keen to rid the Union of the left opposition. He noted that in Ostrava, miners could no longer hold joint conferences with the communists without quarrels breaking out. "It is not possible to convene joint factory meetings without breaches of the peace."⁵⁷ Owing to communist attacks on the Union, a united organisation in Ostrava was inoperable.⁵⁸ The existing state of affairs had to change, he reportedly told a meeting of Social Democratic factory council groups on 4 November.⁵⁹ It appears that by the end of October at the latest, union leaders had become reconciled to a split.

During November, accusations and counter-accusations proliferated in the press. *Dělnický deník* described the election of a new non-communist Regional Committee as a "putsch" by the Social Democrats.⁶⁰

The Kladno miners' committee also protested against this action, but insisted on unity until a majority had been won for Profintern methods.⁶¹ Communist miners' meetings in the Ostrava area likewise attacked the activities of the union leadership.⁶² Brožík intimated that at one such meeting at the "Emma" mine in Silesian Ostrava on 11 November, it was decided to join the MVS, on the orders of that body, and to donate 1,500 crowns to its funds.⁶³ The campaign to rally the miners for a transfer to the MVS reached a peak at the end of November when *Dělnický deník* published an article calling on all miners to join the MVS. It appears that by initiating a press propaganda campaign, the communists split on the Social Democratic union leadership.

On 25 November meetings of all the communist groups in Ostrava *"unanimously decided to transfer immediately and en masse to the MVS miners' section."* According to the local KSČ daily, approximately 10,000 miners, "a good 60 percent," answered the call, including even some disgruntled Social Democratic workers.⁶⁴ The slogan was "everyone into the MVS!"⁶⁵ The membership figures, when one allows for various discrepancies, show that although the communists did not enjoy majority support in the Union of Miners, they did have a powerful base, particularly in Kladno and Ostrava. The OSČ union reports from 1924 and 1927 claim that of the 19,990 Czech miners in the Ostrava-Karviná coal-field in 1922, 11,653 remained loyal at the time of the split; of the 5,432 Polish miners, 3,100 stayed in the union, making a total of 14,753. Clearly, the 8,000 members of the communist section joined the MVS. In the solidly communist Kladno area, a mere 287 remained in the OSČ union out of 7,634 members; in the Rosice-Oslavany region west of Brno, 2,378 out of 3,025; in the Plzeň-Nýřany field 2,965 from 4,158; and in north Bohemia, 3,612 out of 6,787. The total union membership dropped from 91,979 in 1921 to 65,207 in 1922 and to 30,524 in 1923.⁶⁶

In comparison, the MVS miners' section report from 1926 claimed a total of 11,193 members in Ostrava-Karviná in 1924 and a section membership of 18,023 in 1923, rising to 25,499 in 1924.⁶⁷ One can calculate that in Ostrava approximately thirty percent of the 1922 union membership joined the MVS, i.e. 9 to 10,000 out of 33,000.⁶⁸ Of the total 1922 membership, around twenty-eight percent transferred to the MVS, and forty-eight percent remained loyal. Of the rest, many miners abandoned trade unionism altogether, joined rival organisations, or became unemployed in the course of 1923. One can conclude that the

united front from below, the aim of which was to capture a majority of members in reformist unions, was not a notable success in the miners' union. Only perhaps one third of Czechoslovak socialist miners supported the communist cause in 1923.

Social Democratic and Communist assessments of the split contrast markedly. The former's position was best summed up in a series of articles by Brožík published in *Právo lidu* in December, 1923. He argued that,

all their [i.e. the communists'] activities in this campaign merely prove that the withdrawal from the union had been prepared well in advance and that they were only waiting for a favourable opportunity.

This arose immediately after the miners' strike. Communists believed that the union would be financially exhausted after this dispute and would not be able to resist their attack. Such is the nature of their "united front."⁶⁹ Communist functionaries attended secret meetings arranged by the KSČ despite the fact that the union had forbidden these gatherings, and in Ostrava meetings were held by the communist section without the necessary prior notice being given to local union secretaries. According to Brožík, the party issued the orders, not the trade union bodies.⁷⁰ The union leadership also contended vehemently that communists were not expelled, but left voluntarily, "blindly obeying the *diktat* of the Communist Party."⁷¹ An overwhelming majority of members stayed faithful to the union, above all the older workers who had built the organisation.⁷² The SDP daily asserted that,

the break-up of the miners' union, directed by the Communist Party centre and the 'trade unionist' Kohn, has not been as successful as the communists had expected.⁷³

Similarly, the union board in session on 30 December adamantly refused to accept blame for the split, stating that,

a certain part of the membership left the union, the majority of whom became indifferent to trade unionism... the communist members left on the basis of prepared actions...

The whole affair demonstrated that "... the methods of the Communist Party only divide and weaken the working class and its organisations."⁷⁴

The MVS miners' report in stark contrast placed full responsibility for the split on the union leadership, which:

...endeavoured to get rid of the class-conscious part of the membership at any cost, in order to implement undisturbed its anti-worker, reformist policies.

The split was "systematically prepared" by the Social Democrats. In response communist group meetings in Ostrava on 25 November exhorted members to join the MVS "... in order to maintain organisational continuity," a curious remark, which probably reflects the perceived need to consolidate the local communist section. The action then spread to other coalfields, namely Rosice, Plzeň and Kladno. In conclusion, the report declared that,

the Union of Miners in the Czechoslovak Republic was thus split through the fault of its own leadership, and the coal-barons were strengthened.⁷⁵

Who was really responsible? Two sources may provide us with a more satisfying answer. The first is the report of the KSČ trade union department to the second party congress in November, 1924. The second, and more conclusive, is the testimony of Václav Konopa, the leader of the Kladno miners and chairman of the MVS section until October, 1925. The former openly admitted that the trade union department under Rudolf Kohn had established *before* November, 1923 a system of fraction apparatuses in Ostrava and Rosice, the aim of which was to ensure that the majority of members would join the MVS after the split.⁷⁶ The department had evidently been preparing for a split some time before it actually occurred, which corroborates Brožík's argument. Konopa's testimony was devastating in its extraordinary frankness, describing communist tactics in union struggles more lucidly than any other commentary.

Addressing himself to the "working public and the mining industry," Konopa began by disclosing that after "prolonged consideration" he

had decided to leave the KSČ and the MVS miners' section and to re-join the SDP and the Union of Miners. He had originally enlisted in the KSČ, "like a great many former Social Democrats," because he anticipated that the communists would forcefully defend the interests of the working class along the lines of the old and attested principles of the SDP. He was convinced, as were his associates, that he would never abandon these principles nor the programme of the SDP, and believed that organisational and action unity would be renewed.

But living experience has brought me to the irrevocable conviction that this aim will never be accomplished in the Communist Party and that, on the contrary, the sole mission of this party... is to maintain and intensify disruption in the workers' movement, regardless of the losses and sacrifices.

Konopa then went on to analyse the split, stating that,

for a long time we [the Kladno miners] prevented the division of the united Union of Miners, but what proved ultimately decisive was the senseless command of Kohn, who was up till then an unknown in the workers' movement and who had been designated dictator of the trade union movement by the political leadership of the Communist Party. *I state explicitly that the split in the Union of Miners was not carried out according to the needs of the union, but that communist miners were driven, in the literal sense of the word, into the MVS miners' section. It was Kohn who incited us to leave the miners' union.*

Konopa concluded his damning account with an appeal to all workers, particularly miners, to regroup within OSČ and SDP organisations where a proper united front of the working class would be created.⁷⁷ Immediately after he announced his resignation, *Rudé právo* published a report on a conference of Kladno miners which had condemned him as a "traitor."⁷⁸

If we regard Konopa's testimony as accurate, it quite explicitly answers two vital questions: namely, whether the split was consciously planned by the communists, and if so, to what extent was it organised by the KSČ. Without gaining access to party archives one can never be

completely certain about the inner machinations of the KSČ, but from the available evidence it appears most probable that the Communist Party, acting through the radical Kohn and his trade union department, initiated, orchestrated and finally imposed the policy of splitting the Union of Miners on the more moderate miners based in the Kladno area. Significantly, however, the policy did have the backing of several authoritative figures in the Red Unions, including Josef Hais himself, and militant functionaries and miners in the Ostrava-Karviná region, such as Josef Pergl. This fact was pointed out by *Na zdar*, which maintained that Pergl and Hais wanted to "achieve the break-up of the Union of Miners at any price" ⁷⁹ *Rudý odborář* acknowledged that the MVS leaders were strongly behind the attempts to transfer communist miners. ⁸⁰ Indeed, Hais had on occasions expounded the idea that the Red Unions should be strengthened by accepting into their ranks communists in reformist organisations. ⁸¹

Thus, it must be emphasised that the KSČ and MVS leaderships were working in close harmony, at least by October, 1923, and were able to overcome opposition within the communist camp. Their aims ultimately coincided since both stood to gain from the split. A fortified miners' section increased communist influence in the Czech labour movement, while simultaneously weakening that of the Social Democrats. The latter had little to gain from a schism, save a disorganised and numerically and financially weakened union, albeit without the sizeable dissident communist minority. A major problem remains. This is how to explain the rupture in the light of Profintern insistence on the united front and the need for union unity. In July 1923 Lozovsky had written that the Red Unions in Czechoslovakia had committed the "decided error" of not agitating for the restoration of united unions following the split in the OSČ in 1922. "The struggle for unity" was the key to communist success in the trade union movement, but many Czech unionists did not understand this. ⁸²

The split nevertheless occurred. The explanation lies in the definition of the word "unity" and in the ultimate aim of the united front tactic. Unity for Lozovsky, the KSČ and the MVS, just as for the Social Democrats, meant above all unity on their own terms. The unification of the Czech union movement was to be accomplished around revolutionary ideas and methods. No concessions were possible on matters of principle.

This was stressed again and again. The united front tactic, although a step to the "right," was intended to strengthen the communists by weakening the Social Democrats. When Moscow's aims are viewed in this light, we can see that Lozovsky and the KSČ attacked only the notion of transferring individuals and small groups of communists, both the concept of strengthening the Red Unions by mass affiliation from reformist unions. Once a majority, or more likely in practice a substantial minority, had been won over to the communist cause, splits were possible, as Lozovsky had asserted in February, 1922.⁸³ In conclusion one can say that although the MVS leadership adopted an independent line over its "transference policy," which in itself was by no means insignificant, it adhered to the aims of the KSČ and Moscow in the struggle within the Union of Miners.

The United Front From Above: Negotiations for Unity in the Metal Unions

Negotiations for renewed unity between the OSČ Union of Metalworkers and the MVS metalworkers' section, which took place in early 1925, marked a milestone in post-war Czech labour history. For the first time since the schism of 1922, Social Democratic and Communist trade union representatives attempted to re-unite one of the largest and most powerful unions in Czechoslovakia. Although the process proved to be unsuccessful, the very fact that the two sides sat around a table was significant. It demonstrated that Social Democrats and Communists could discuss rationally matters of mutual concern without necessarily viewing each other as mortal enemies. The only prerequisite was a willingness to compromise, but ultimately this sense of conciliation proved sadly lacking.

The OSČ Union of Metalworkers had witnessed a bitter internal conflict in the early summer of 1922. Following the May strike in Prague and central Bohemia, the union was split, a small leftist minority joining the Chemical workers' union and in October, the MVS as a metalworkers' section. The manner in which the split occurred engendered a profound antipathy between the two union bodies, an antipathy not helped by mutual press attacks.⁸⁴ In this distrustful and antagonistic atmosphere, it is hardly surprising that the possibility of joint negotiations was broached only after a period of two and a half years. During

that time, however, the MVS section led by František Sejpka made two direct overtures to the OSČ union on the need for a united front, the first in June, 1923 and the second a year later.⁸⁵ The automatic rejection of any cooperation by both the OSČ and the ČOD (National Socialist) unions brought forth critical responses from the MVS, calling on metalworkers to form a united front over the heads of their leaders.⁸⁶ In 1924, *Dělník* kept up a sustained attack on Antonín Hampl, the union president, on the union itself and its organ *Zájmy kovodělníků*. This tended to reduce the appeals for joint action to a purely propagandistic level.⁸⁷ On the other hand, it should be noted that Hampl and other leading functionaries were staunchly opposed to cooperating with the communists, and entertained the possibility of unification solely on their own terms.

The theoretical and tactical motivation for the 1925 negotiations, as far as the communists were concerned, was the resolution on trade union tactics adopted by the fifth Comintern congress in July 1924. This stated that,

where the trade union movement is split, systematic work must be carried on among the masses for the re-establishment of unity by convening a unity congress on the basis of proportional representation and freedom of the ideological struggle⁸⁸

Lozovsky said that such a congress should take place in Czechoslovakia.⁸⁹ More specifically, the Comintern ordered member sections to aim for the unification of the most important branches of industry, which was of direct relevance to developments in the Czech metal industry.⁹⁰ The third Profintern congress determined that in some cases, as in the past, the united front from above was possible.⁹¹ This opened the way to direct contact between communist and Social Democratic union leaders. In Czechoslovakia these directives provided the basis and justification for the metalworker talks.

Indeed, there is ample evidence to suggest that the higher political and trade union authorities had a decisive influence on the MVS leadership. Firstly, the second congress of the KSČ decided to launch a campaign for the convocation of unification congresses in various industrial branches. The Comintern representative, Dmitrii Manuilsky, said that the principal goal was the renewal of trade union unity through the

pressure of the masses from below.⁹² Secondly, Kohn, speaking at a December conference of KSČ and MVS officials in Karlín warned that this campaign was a strict order from Moscow and the Executive Committee of the KSČ.⁹³ Finally, Rudolf Hájek, writing after the first joint meeting, asserted that the basis for the talks was the third Profintern congress resolution on trade union unity.⁹⁴

Seizing the concept of a united front from above, the MVS leadership was quick to propose joint action with other union centres. On 9 September Hais and Sejpka, the MVS president, sent a letter to the OSČ and *Gewerkschaftsbund* leaders calling for united action against inflation, and inviting them to a joint meeting on 17 September.⁹⁵ The unions made no immediate reply, but the SDP rejected the offer.⁹⁶ Only three months later did the OSČ board finally refuse cooperation with the MVS.⁹⁷ Hampl himself expressed his deep mistrust and suspicion of the united front tactic when he portrayed the National Congress of Factory Councils and Committees, which was convoked in October 1924, as an attempt "...to lay the foundations for Communist Party political agitation in the factories and plants."⁹⁸ For its part, the MVS metal section adopted a dual policy in late 1924 and early 1925, alternating between attacks on Hampl and "his" union, and pleas for trade union unity.⁹⁹ On balance though, the background to the talks was not auspicious.

It appears that the immediate initiative for the negotiations came surprisingly from the Union of Metalworkers, perhaps succumbing to pressure from below, or perhaps believing the MVS section was prepared to rejoin the OSČ. At a board meeting on 31 January 1925 Hampl said that communist organisations stood on the verge of "a catastrophe" and all that was left for them was a merger. Kresta recommended that the communist offer of a "joint front" be accepted.¹⁰⁰ A national union conference held the following day adopted a resolution which suggested "a merger of working class forces" in the metal industry, providing the slogan of the united front was meant "absolutely loyally."¹⁰¹ Although the conference agreed to negotiations, Hampl criticised the MVS saying "the communist call for a united front is quite comical," and appealed to MVS metalworkers to return to "their maternal organisation." A delegate from Vítkovice and Dreml from Prague condemned the idea of negotiations, but found themselves in a minority.¹⁰² The hope for unification seems to have been paramount in the minds of the delegates, overcoming the scepticism and suspicions of communist intentions.

On the basis of this conference, the board decided on 4 February to invite the MVS section to a joint meeting. If accepted, the union would "proceed very cautiously."¹⁰³ Three days later a letter was dispatched to the communist metalworkers proposing a meeting to discuss the possibility of a merger. The missive also contained a rather untimely reminder of the damage suffered by the workers as a result of the communist-inspired split in 1922.¹⁰⁴ In spite of this scarcely veiled attack, the MVS section "in agreement with the central union board" replied in the affirmative.¹⁰⁵ Just one week before the initial encounter the union weekly, *Zájmy kovodělníků*, published a short article assailing the notion of united organisations as espoused by the KSČ and MVS. It was said that the metal section representatives aimed to weaken the working class and break up OSČ metalworker groups.¹⁰⁶ In such a distrustful atmosphere, the talks had little chance of success.

The opening session took place on 25 February 1925 at the Union secretariat building, with the following participants: Hampl, Jakubka, Dundr, Hazuka, Kadlec, Veverka and Barták for the OSČ union, and Sejpka, Kolský, Barášek and Hájek for the MVS section.¹⁰⁷ Hampl delivered the main address, starting with a provocative rejection of the principles of the "Russian revolution" (presumably the Bolshevik), which signified "reaction and the weakening of revolutionary achievements. . . ." He especially regretted the splits in the labour movement that sprung from these principles. He then claimed that OSČ unions had "absolute independence" and were "not politicised." On a more conciliatory note, he ended by saying that his organisation was seriously considering a merger, but not a "united front."

Sejpka, replying for the communist metalworkers, justified the existence of MVS sections and expressed his belief that all trade unions should be amalgamated, including the central bodies. He did not, however, make this a precondition of future negotiations. In answering Hampl's accusations, he inadvertently let slip an interesting detail:

I do not wish to say that all the articles in the economic and social columns of *Rudé právo* tally with our convictions, but as good soldiers of the Communist Party we must identify ourselves with them.

Sejпка evidently possessed a solid enough communist mentality and discipline to accept certain things with which he did not agree. He finished his contribution by asking Hampl to list his conditions for a merger, to which the latter replied, "we don't have any!", except the principle "to preserve loyally the unity of trade union organisations." Once again Hampl cast doubt on the sincerity of the MVS and then dismissed the prospect of merging the OSČ and MVS, since this was "dependent on the amalgamation of Moscow and Amsterdam." On the immediate question at hand, his practical suggestions for unification were bound to prove unacceptable to the MVS delegation. He proposed a system of proportional representation for a future union board based on respective union membership. As the OSČ union had 60,000 and the MVS section 20,000 members, the latter would receive five seats on a fifteen-member executive, Hampl adding, almost in parenthesis, "... following the liquidation of your section."

Rudolf Hájek, representing the MVS leadership, adopted a more hard-line approach than Sejпка and defended the idea that trade unions should be under the influence of the Communist Party, just as the Union of Metalworkers was under the influence of the Second International. The merger of unions "from above, from the leadership" was impossible. "This meeting will not solve the question of the amalgamation of the metalworkers." Hájek's formula for unification followed strictly the model laid down by Moscow: the dissolution of both trade union organisations and the convocation of a merger congress to decide on which International to join, Moscow or Amsterdam. The majority at the congress would form the leadership of the new union. On one thing the communists were adamant. They would never forego the right to struggle for their ideals and opinions. By way of response, Hampl chose to concentrate on the similarities between the two unions' tactics, stating "the Red trade unions have always used the same tactics as our organisations." Indeed, Hájek had mentioned that "... we are united on economic issues." The differences became obvious, however, on the problem of how to effect a merger. Hampl rejected the idea of the dissolution of unions and the holding of a merger congress, arguing that it would lead to fresh conflicts and spread confusion. He asserted that workers in the MVS section did not desire this solution. He nevertheless ended the meeting on an optimistic note by declaring, "there is goodwill as well as an intention to merge on our side."¹⁰⁸

A more pessimistic strain was struck by *Zájmy kovodělníků* in an article devoted to the discussions. The anonymous author, in an effort to emphasise and widen the gap between Hájek and the other MVS representatives, concentrated on the great differences that existed between their respective ideas. Hájek had listed a number of conditions upon which Sejpka had not insisted. Hájek's formulations were politically inspired by *Rudé právo* and were not designed to lead to the unification of the working class.¹⁰⁹ The SDP daily, *Právo lidu*, accused the KSČ organ of distorting the negotiations by claiming that the OSČ union representatives wanted a transfer of MVS members to their organisation on the basis of an "agreement from above." This assertion was denied by *Právo lidu*.¹¹⁰ If the aim of the Social Democrats was to drive a wedge between the political protagonists (Hájek and the KSČ) and the trade unionists (Sejpka Kolský and Barášek), the result was largely a failure. Sejpka faithfully reiterated *Rudé právo*'s call for a merger of the OSČ and MVS, and for extending the metalworker negotiations to include the German Social Democratic and ČOD unions.¹¹¹ Moreover, a letter sent by the MVS section to Hampl's union in June, 1926, stressed Hájek's conception of unification based on the liquidation of existing unions, a merger congress and new organisational unity.¹¹² The communist bloc appeared to be monolithic.¹¹³

A second joint meeting took place on 19 March 1925. Sejpka started the proceedings by raising the official party line of a merger of the OSČ and MVS centres, and by expressing the wish of his membership for talks between the centres on the unification of all unions. Should this be impossible, there should at least be negotiations among all metalworker organisations, including the Chomutov German Social Democratic union and the ČOD body. Hampl saw no possibility of successful discussions between trade union centres, and was equally pessimistic about the chances of uniting all metalworkers, since earlier talks with the ČOD union had failed. He said that if the MVS representatives insisted on the amalgamation of union centres or all metal organisations, they were barring the way to the merger of the OSČ and MVS unions. The deadlock continued with Hájek contending that Hampl's union had made a merger dependent on the acceptance of its statutes. This was an unreasonable condition. He then repeated his ideas for unification as expounded at the previous meeting, and voiced his desire that every union

organisation, above all the German metalworkers, should be included in the talks. He concluded, "we do not make this a condition, but it is our opinion." In more illuminating fashion, Hájek admitted that, "there are among us workers who are opposed to a merger," a position no doubt shared by some in the KSČ and MVS leaderships.

Hampl yet again took the floor and rejected Hájek's notion of a merger congress. It would be "arranged," the resolution and even the speeches would be prepared in advance, as happened at communist congresses, and a certain amount of force would be used against "the suppressed minority." He clearly doubted the sincerity of Hájek's proposals, fearing that after a merger congress the new union would immediately re-divide into two camps. It was likewise out of the question to contemplate unity within the MVS section, as even Red Unions, such as the builders, wood and transport workers, had no wish to do so. Hampl also inferred that the central MVS leadership believed the time was not yet ripe for a merger, and hence put obstacles in the path of the section delegates. Despite the fact that the OSČ representatives had refused the MVS proposals, the proclamation issued after the meeting was, on the surface, a surprising success for the MVS negotiators. It stated that, "a merger is possible and necessary, and will occur *at a merger congress*." No concrete details were agreed upon as it was left to the respective union boards to discuss the problem of the tactics, statutes and candidate lists of any future unified organisation.¹¹⁴ The board of the Union of Metalworkers, sitting on 25 March recognised that the negotiations had led to the idea of a unification congress and that preparations were to be undertaken in separate commissions.¹¹⁵

The progress of the second meeting was rudely halted by renewed polemics in the union press at the end of March and early April. The "tendentious reports" in communist journals represented the principal obstacle to unity, according to the Union of Metalworkers. Hampl had insisted that no reports should be published on the course of the negotiations, most likely fearing distortion. His wrath was thus aroused by an article in *Rudý odborář* which strongly denied his assertion that the views of the section representatives differed from Hájek's. The latter merely adopted the official standpoint of the Profintern. It was Hampl, not Hájek, said the article, who placed the most difficult conditions on a merger, by demanding that the MVS section should join the OSČ

union and accept its statutes.¹¹⁶ These words and the subsequent complaint made by Hampl elicited a most noteworthy response from Sejpka and Kolský. In a letter to the Union of Metalworkers, dated 27 March, they wrote that their section had no "special influence" over *Rudý odborář*, and admitted that,

...the article ... published in *Rudý odborář* does not reflect our opinions, but the opinions of the editor Hájek, and thus our section cannot take any responsibility for it.

Furthermore, the section board intended to "...lodge a complaint at the appropriate place" about Hájek's activities and his commentaries on the merger.¹¹⁷ Nothing came of the affair, and on the very next day, 28 March, the section completed an intriguing *volte face* by publishing an article fully substantiating Hájek's idea that the main obstacle to unity was Hampl's plan to transfer communist metalworkers to the OSČ. The author further emphasised the metal section's loyal position by declaring "obviously the revolutionary workers will not retreat from the decisions of the R.I.L.U."¹¹⁸

The Union of Metalworkers replied that the article "...contradicts your [Sejpka's] pronouncement of your sincere will to work towards a merger." No more meetings could be contemplated after this display of "clumsy writing," since:

our organisation is convinced that the MVS metal section is too dependent on the MVS and the Communist Party and that even if it is well disposed to work towards a merger, decisive agents are preventing it.

The MVS section had therefore "...created artificial barriers to the merger," whilst the OSČ union had "...entered into negotiations most seriously and conscientiously."¹¹⁹ *Zájmy kovodělníků* also vented its anger on the KSČ and MVS central leadership, implying that these bodies were intensifying the anti-merger campaign because they feared the loss of a vital component of the communist movement. As the metalworker section was "...ideologically and materially totally dependent on the MVS and the Communist Party, it had to obey..." even though some

of its members, i.e. those in Brno, advised the section leadership to continue unification discussions.¹²⁰

The metal section dismissed these allegations, arguing that the KSČ and MVS wanted the unification of trade union organisations, but not on the basis of the reformists' anti-working class policy of retreat before the capitalists.¹²¹ The blame for the failure of the negotiations was put firmly on the OSČ union, which had entered into the talks "purely academically."¹²² The section, on the other hand, wanted "general discussions on unity" to continue.¹²³ Surprisingly, the minutes of the OSČ union board meetings show that further talks were planned right up to June, 1925, although nothing came of the good intentions.¹²⁴ The attempt was repeated in the third quarter of 1926, but once again to no avail. The familiar stumbling-blocks prevented even a preliminary meeting, inevitable given the fact that neither side was willing to compromise, and indeed both hardened their positions. In a communication of 11 October 1926 the Union of Metalworkers stated that it was "self-evident" than any future unified organisation would "... be a member of the OSČ," while in reply the MVS section insisted on a merger congress and on the participation of the German Social Democratic metalworkers.¹²⁵ It was this intransigence, suspicion and downright hostility on both sides which doomed the metalworker unification talks to failure, and likewise doomed the united front from above, as employed by the MVS.

As to the vital question of whether there existed a rift in the communist ranks, the available evidence only partially corroborates Hampl's assertions. Hájek placed more emphasis on a merger "from below" than Sepjka, and hence implemented more correctly Profintern directives. This was an important difference. On a wider scale, the MVS leadership by agreeing to merger talks with Hampl "from above" laid itself open to attack from KSČ leftists who saw the negotiations as nothing more than direct contact between the two executives over the heads of the workers. In July 1925 *Rudé právo* declared that trade union unification could not be simply a question of negotiations between leaders, but should involve the working masses.¹²⁶ The third party congress in September 1925 voiced a similar concern, stating that unification had to be preceded by an untiring, broad propaganda campaign among members of all unions in order to develop a united front from below.¹²⁷

The MVS was thus criticised for over-emphasising the united front from above to the detriment of work from below.

Despite party opposition to the metalworker talks and the fact that the MVS negotiators were not totally united in their approach, it must be recognised that ultimately communist discipline reigned supreme. Sejpka and his colleagues may have had private misgivings about Hájek's stance, but in public they adopted a solid, disciplined position, completely identifying themselves with the official KSČ and Profintern line. Communist loyalty overcame independent initiative. Sejpka wrote that he would never "...deviate from Marxist-Leninist principles."¹²⁸ Even if he and colleagues had wished to come to an independent agreement with Hampl, which in itself is a doubtful supposition, they were hardly in a position to do so, given the section's relationship to the MVS and KSČ. As Hájek made plain in March, 1925,

it is...necessary to emphasise that the metalworkers' section is an organic and indivisible part of the MVS and that the latter, as the central body, decides on overall strategy.¹²⁹

Despite the failure of the metalworker negotiations, the MVS did not tire of making further attempts at a united front from above, including demands for joint action with the OSČ, ČOD and German Social Democratic unions.¹³⁰ The eternal dilemma was that no matter how often the MVS expounded the idea of a united front, the non-communist union leaders never, or very rarely, acceded to it, believing it to be nothing more than an alien strategem. This attitude was summed up in an OSČ metalworker report of 1926, which asserted that the united front:

...was not a domestic slogan, but was imported from Russia after the political and trade union Internationals had decreed its propagation. Its aim was not to unite the divided working class, but to enable the Communist Party to 'influence' and finally gain control of it in its entirety. It was therefore not meant seriously and honestly. It was a manoeuvre and a means of agitation.

If unity was to be achieved, communists had to propagate the united front, "that is united organisations," sincerely and loyally. Yet on the

one hand they "... talk about joint action and on the other carry out splits in trade union organisations by forming cells." ¹³¹

The OSČ central leadership was also deeply suspicious of the united front. General Secretary Tayerle in his address to the eighth union congress in June 1926 said that,

... the attacks from your [MVS] side, and your dependence on the Communist Party, as well as on the political Communist International, do not guarantee the success of the sought-after cooperation. ¹³²

At a meeting of the OSČ board of representatives on 1 April 1927 he repeated this claim and stated that the OSČ stood on principle against the slogan of the united front. ¹³³ The ninth OSČ congress report was even more explicit:

the guarantee of the united advance of the working class in economic struggles is united trade union organisations, not a mere united front, which on the contrary is a direct danger to this unity... since the real breakers of organisational unity hide behind this slogan. ¹³⁴

The OSČ notion of "united trade union organisations" meant in practice reunification within the framework of the OSČ, which, as we have seen, was totally unacceptable to the MVS and KSČ leaders.

In theory then there was no hope of cooperation. In reality, on two occasions in 1927 joint meetings were convened involving MVS, OSČ, ČOD and *Gewerkschaftsbund* representatives. The catalyst was a government proposal in early 1927 to reduce workers' social security benefits, a move which aroused great indignation among many Czechoslovak workers. In response Josef Hais invited the OSČ, ČOD and German union leaders to join forces against the attacks on miners' insurance. ¹³⁵ This initiative resulted in a conference on 2 April at which Hais called for a "cartel of trade union centres," an idea previously expressed at the second MVS and fourth KSČ congresses in January 1926 and March 1927 respectively. He argued that the cartel would represent over one million members and would be headed by a joint executive. He also demanded a one-day

general strike of all workers in the republic and joint demonstrations against the capitalists.¹³⁶ These proposals received little sympathy from the Social Democrats and National Socialists. Two days earlier the board of the OSČ Union of Miners had decisively rejected any cooperation with the MVS section, deeming it to be an instrument of the Communist Party's political aims.¹³⁷ The next six months saw no further progress, but at the end of November a second joint conference was held, at which the non-communist delegates, according to *Dělník*, refused once again to discuss the "fighting" proposals of the MVS.¹³⁸ Concerted action was undertaken in one of two unions, most notably in the textile workers' union, but to all intents and purposes the united front from above remained a dead letter in the Czechoslovak trade union movement in the 1920s.¹³⁹

The Czech historian Miloš Hájek has described relations between European Social Democratic and Communist Parties in the 1920s as "frozen" (*zmrazení*). Although compromise was seen as necessary,

... the ideal for each was organic unity on the basis of their own programme. i.e. achieved by the political liquidation of the other. Both parties approached unity of action from the viewpoint of their own corporate interests... which meant above all strengthening itself to the detriment of the other party.

According to Hájek, the Comintern's motive for implementing the united front tactic was the knowledge that it was impossible to increase communist influence by any other means. Communists saw it as a "way out of isolation," based on the idea of mutual competition in the struggle for the daily economic and political demands of the workers, while simultaneously appealing to the Social Democrats for cooperation against the capitalist state.

The Social Democrats did not reject cooperation on principle, but they did set conditions that were unfavourable for the communists. Both sides then insisted on their own conditions of cooperation

The process was not facilitated by the fact that the communists did not have a concrete idea of organic unity outside the call for unification based on their conception of Marxism-Leninism.¹⁴⁰

Most of Hájek's generalised, political interpretations are true for the Czechoslovak trade union movement. The MVS leadership viewed the united front as essentially a manoeuvre against the capitalist state. As Arno Hais wrote in January, 1925, "unity means unity against the capitalist system, not unity for unity's sake." Therefore, communists could "...expect nothing more than great resistance and counter-actions" from the reformists.¹⁴¹ Rudolf Hájek maintained that "...the united front is only the practical beginning of organisational unification."¹⁴² Such unification was to be achieved through the creation of a new union organisation following joint worker action from below on the terms laid down by the communists. Against this idea the OSČ counterposed the notion of unity within the framework of "the maternal organisation." The united front tactic thus floundered on the rock of mutual intransigence and self-interest. Another vital element to be considered is the fact that the Red Unions at no time in the 1920s represented more than 12 per cent of trade unionised workers. The communists were powerless to force the Social Democrats into any form of long-term joint action or organisational unity, since the reformists were quite content to see the Red Unions isolated and weak. The united front, after all, was intended to benefit the communists, not the Social Democrats. The position of the Czech working class, in whose name the whole dispute between the MVS and OSČ was acted out, became of secondary importance as the protagonists became more and more bogged down in ideological, tactical and procedural details. The fundamental, and as it proved insoluble, dilemma for the Czechoslovak communists is perhaps best illustrated by this MVS statement from February, 1925:

*it is the mission of the MVS to struggle for the renewal of working class unity against the reformists. . . .*¹⁴³

How to achieve lasting unity "against the reformists" was never satisfactorily explained and thereby doomed to failure.

CHAPTER SIX

MVS RELATIONS WITH THE KŠČ AND THE MOSCOW INTERNATIONALS I

In the 1920s MVS relations with the Communist Party and the Moscow Internationals can best be characterised as a state of semi-permanent tension. Party leaders and Comintern and Profintern spokesmen engaged in criticism of MVS activity, or the lack of it, on a number of issues ranging from ideological and tactical considerations to the internal organisational structure and day-to-day management of the union. Toward the end of the decade this criticism culminated in personalised attacks on MVS leaders and in the eventual schism of March 1929. The specific areas of discord were manifold and in many cases inter-connected, but can be divided as follows: the MVS policy of transferring communist trade unionists from reformist to Red organisations; the failure to carry out fraction work, most notably in Social Democratic unions; the strictly centralised internal structure of the MVS; the incorrect formulation of the united front tactic and strike strategy; and the whole question of party interference in union affairs, typified by the activity of Kohn's trade union department. The present chapter will concentrate on the first two issues, namely the transfer of communists and the lack of fraction work.

Beforehand, two other important problems need to be discussed: the nature and role of trade unionism as conceived by the MVS leadership,

and the non-homogeneity of the communist camp. The MVS position stressed that trade unions were bodies representing the broad working masses in which all workers of a given industrial branch should be concentrated, regardless of political, national and religious affiliations. The MVS leaders were convinced that the trade union movement should be united, and that the Red Unions should be strictly centralised. Union organisations were viewed as "reservoirs" for the political revolutionary class movement, and as schools for training the proletariat, even its most backward strata. By fighting for the workers' daily demands unions would more easily attract the broadest masses into their ranks and educate them in the spirit of class-consciousness. Unions should not, however, be concerned merely with narrow, professional interests guided by the theory of political neutrality and independence from the other components of the labour movement. The theory of neutrality was regarded as an "anti-class . . . bourgeois idea," as Lenin had said as early as 1907, because it "led the working class astray." Communists diametrically opposed the Social Democratic concept of the neutrality of unions in political affairs. On the contrary, unions had to be organised on an anti-capitalist, class basis and had to adopt this class, political standpoint on all economic and social questions since ". . . the working class struggle cannot be artificially divided into a political and an economic struggle . . ." The three trends in the labour movement, the trade union, cooperative and political ". . . must of necessity work in close contact . . .," led by the political organisation. The ultimate, joint aim was the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a socialist system.¹

At this point, some cautionary words are needed on the lack of homogeneity in the Communist Party and Red Unions. As mentioned above, the "Communist Party" and the "Red Unions" can rarely, if ever, be considered monolithic entities.² In reality, both were deeply divided between adherents of the "right," "left" and "centre," a division also apparent in the lower levels of the party and union administration and membership. Up to early 1925, the extreme right of the KSČ was represented by Bubník, Rouček and Votava and their disciples in the Prague and Brno party branches. They were expelled in February 1925 for "right-wing opportunism." Other rightists included Hůla, Muna, Kreibich and Josef Hais himself, at least on the question of trade union autonomy. The left was composed of old radicals like Jílek, Bolen, Houser and Štunc,

joined in the mid-twenties by figures like Haken, Neurath, Stern, Verčík, Harus, Hruška and Gottwald. The extreme left, as it developed in 1927 and 1928, was centred around the latter and included Sánský, Reiman, Fried, Kohn, Šverma and Guttmann. This new leftist opposition overturned the "old left" of Jílek and Bolen at the fifth party congress in February 1929. The centre, loosely associated with the founding father of the party, Bohumír Šmeral, and to a lesser extent with the "survivor," Antonín Zápotocký, was somewhat confusingly dubbed the "historic right." "Membership" of any given tendency was not always fixed. On different issues, individuals adopted different standpoints, and indeed the terms "right" and "left" tended to lose all real meaning and significance. For instance, it was not unheard of for a communist to be a "leftist" one year and a "rightist" the next, as in the case of Karel Kreibich.

Policy differences between the various groupings in the KSČ revolved around the Bolshevisation of the party and its reorganisation on the basis of factory cells; the problem of national self-determination and the antagonisms among Czechs, Slovaks and Germans; the degree of independence of party affiliated organisations, such as the Red Trade Unions; and the differing emphasis placed on revolutionary as opposed to parliamentary work, all four of which were closely tied to the question of the authority of the Comintern in internal Czechoslovak affairs. Somewhat simplistically, the right stood for a more moderate, independent approach, while the left, and especially, the "new left" around Gottwald, became ever more vociferous in its support for Comintern directives and tactics. In the period 1922-1927, both sides generally sought to justify their position by quoting authoritative sources in Moscow, and never openly condemned their superiors in the Comintern.³

A parallel developments occurred in the Red trade union movement. As we have seen, the leaders of the independent unions, Tetenka, Teska, Handlř, Krátký and Liška, all resisted party interference in union affairs and can thus be considered the extreme right of the movement. Central MVS leaders like Josef and Arno Hais, Nádvorník, Halík, Halman, Sýkora and Sejkpa also became increasingly resentful of party domination over what they perceived as their rightful domain. Throughout the years 1922-1927, the MVS strove to pursue independent or semi-independent policies. On the other hand, officials such as Hájek, Bolen, Kolský, Jonáš

and later Zápotocký, Šilhánek and Nosek tended to defend the party's interests in the Red Unions. These internal rifts, both within the KSČ and MVS, became deeper and more bitter as Comintern policy moved increasingly to the left in 1928 and 1929, exposing the real positions of all concerned, positions which had been all too often papered over and concealed behind "unanimous" decisions, statements and resolutions.

The Transfer of Communist Trade Unionists

The first main area of confrontation between the MVS leadership and the KSČ was the thorny issue of the transfer of revolutionary workers from Social Democratic to Red unions. From the outset one should mention that this policy enjoyed widespread support not only in Czechoslovakia, but was also particularly strong in France where parallel Red Unions had been created following a split in the socialist union in December 1921. The French communist union leaders pursued the same policy of transfer as their counterparts in the MVS, resulting in consistent censure from the Comintern and Profintern. This was not always successful, as E. H. Carr has noted:

the uphill struggle waged since the earliest days of the Profintern to halt the secession of communists from 'reformist,' i.e. non-communist, trade unions continued relentlessly.⁴

In Czechoslovakia, the seeds of the dispute were sown at the MVS founding congress in October 1922, at which a resolution was ratified calling on adherents of the Profintern in OSČ unions to transfer immediately to MVS organisations.⁵ One can presume that the resolution received the active backing of Hais and other MVS leaders, given the fact that they viewed the revolutionary unions as "a centralised unit," concentrating all pro-Moscow workers in their ranks.⁶ Thus, from the very foundation of the MVS the aim as far as communist trade unionists were concerned was to strengthen the Red Union movement to the detriment of Social Democratic organisations and this meant primarily the withdrawal of revolutionary workers from OSČ unions. This attitude provoked consistent reprimands from the KSČ and Moscow throughout the united front period.

The official Profintern policy from its foundation in July 1921 was clear:

This tactic of the withdrawal of revolutionary elements from the unions, and the abandonment of the many-million mass of workers to the exclusive influence of traitors to the working class, plays into the hands of the counter-revolutionary trade union bureaucracy and should therefore be sharply and categorically rejected.

This line was re-emphasised at the fourth Comintern congress in November 1922. Lozovsky stated,

a unitary trade union movement is our watchword, and the communists should not therefore pull their members out of the reformist trade unions; for, if we take them out of these and transfer them to the revolutionary trade unions, we cannot influence the reformist organisations in the way we desire and force them into union with the revolutionary organisations.⁷

The resolution ratified by the congress defined the aims of Czechoslovak communist unionists thus:

in countries where there are two trade union federations (Spain, France, Czechoslovakia etc.) communists must fight for the fusion of the dual organisations. Given this goal of merging the unions which are already split, it is not reasonable to detach individual communists and revolutionary workers from the reformist unions in order to bring them into the revolutionary unions. No single reformist union should be robbed of the communist yeast.⁸

With little variation this was to be the approach adopted by Moscow throughout the period of the heyday of the united front, 1922-1927.

Following Comintern instructions strictly, the KSČ issued a statement on the transference issue on 11 November 1922. The Executive Committee rejected MVS policy on the grounds that it meant severing links with the mass of Social Democratic workers. Revolutionary unionists should work within reformist unions to gain new supporters for

Profintern principles and methods. The KSČ leadership asserted that its aim had not been to build separate communist trade unions, but to create a united union movement. Therefore the MVS was looked upon as a temporary body designed to bring about the renewal of union unity.⁹ This was a crucial formulation in that it presaged an almost continual struggle between those in the Red Unions and the party who sought to strengthen the revolutionary unions as a permanent counterweight to the OSČ, and those in the KSČ leadership who underestimated the significance of the MVS and trade union work in general.

This question provides a good example of the non-monolithic nature of the Communist movement. Two important figures in the debate admitted that Czechoslovak communists were divided on this issue. In March 1923 Alois Neurath stated that differences of opinion did exist within the Party on whether communists should remain in Social Democratic unions or join MVS sections.¹⁰ Almost a year and a half later Kohn acknowledged that,

we have trade unionists who demand that all communists leave reformist trade unions and enter into the Red Unions. Our Party fights very energetically against this tendency.¹¹

Indeed, on numerous occasions MVS leaders, particularly Josef and Arno Hais, raised doubts about the Profintern line, and in practice failed to carry it out. A perfect example is Josef Hais's address to the first party congress in February 1923. Here he argued that it was an illusion to expect to capture whole reformist unions from within, because communists would simply be expelled, as happened in 1922. He resented MVS sympathisers paying millions of crowns to the reformists in the form of union dues, and announced:

I don't know, but I would like to affirm that this tactic [of remaining in OSČ unions], which is so tenaciously defended by the RILU and the Communist International, is already unsuitable in Czechoslovak conditions.

On the contrary, Hais preferred to transfer, all Profintern supporters into the ranks of the MVS in order to strengthen the new body and make

it an "army of trade union organisations." To this end, he proposed a resolution which included the idea that all workers in the KSČ should hasten the consolidation of the MVS. Kohn, sharply rejecting this notion, asserted that communist minorities in OSČ unions could not be permitted to leave as this would introduce splits in hitherto united bodies. Comintern policy emphasised unity, not further splitting tactics, and this line according to Kohn "must be implemented." The congress resolution, written by Kohn, stressed that,

under no circumstances should communists transfer revolutionary minorities and individual groups from those Amsterdam unions whose unity has not been broken by the Amsterdamers themselves.

Communists were to remain in Social Democratic organisations and revolutionise the workers from within.¹²

Hais's son, Arno, held identical views to his father. In an article published only a month after the congress he declared openly his opposition to the tactic of keeping communists in reformist unions, especially in organisations where they were weak. To do so would merely represent "a waste" of communist energy and strength. Nevertheless, he was prepared to accept that in unions where communists were strong they should remain in OSČ unions to convert a majority of workers to the cause. Otherwise they should join the MVS.¹³ The problem proved to be so intractable, not only in Czechoslovakia, but elsewhere in Europe, that in the spring and summer of 1923 it formed an important part of the deliberations of three meetings in Moscow.

In April, 1923, the Executive Bureau of the Profintern instructed the MVS and KSČ:

to do everything possible to preserve the unity of those reformist federations which are not yet split, by the ideological organisation of its partisans within the reformist organisations.¹⁴

The third enlarged ECCI plenum in June decided that in France and Czechoslovakia unions expelled by the reformists should join the Red Unions, but at the same time it was declared that individuals and groups should struggle for readmission to the reformist organisations.¹⁵ Finally,

the Profintern Central Council, in session immediately after the ECCI plenum, forcefully reiterated the idea that the transfer of opposition elements from reformist to revolutionary unions was "in no case" possible. Expelled groups and individuals had to make every effort to return to their original organisations.¹⁶

The confused situation in the Czechoslovak Red trade union movement was not alleviated by the decisions of a Communist Party national conference in Brno in early May, 1924. The conference apparently decreed that the transfer of communists was possible in certain, undefined circumstances, but in general terms condemned the policy of the MVS.¹⁷ *Dělník* considered the Brno resolution "a great step forward" and repeated its call for the build-up of revolutionary trade unions.¹⁸ The debate remained, however, far from resolved, and was once again taken to Moscow in the summer of 1924 for the Comintern and Profintern world congresses. By all accounts, the sessions witnessed very sharp disagreements.

The fifth Comintern and third Profintern congresses marked a hardening of attitude toward the united front tactic following the defeat of the "German October" in 1923. The united front from below was re-emphasised, Bolshevisation of the parties, meaning in effect Russification, was mooted for the first time, and Zinoviev invoked Leninism as the theoretical basis of work within the trade unions. As for Czechoslovakia, the MVS gained official recognition, but the split was not to be deepened. On the question of transfer, Josef Hais stated at the Profintern congress that "the tactics of remaining in the reformist unions postpone necessary action to the indefinite future," and another Czech delegate brazenly asserted that "the masses should be led out of the reformist unions into our own organisations." Lozovsky retorted with the telling words that Hais had created "a complete philosophy of splitting," and the congress resolution expressly condemned this tactic in Czechoslovakia.¹⁹ Hais, confronted with Moscow's wrath, reluctantly accepted the congress rulings, but allegedly declared that communists in Czechoslovakia were opposed to Profintern tactics, and yet had to submit to them. Many therefore remained in reformist unions, contributing money to "enemy" organisations. Hais felt the correct line was that only proven communists should work in reformist unions, the rest joining the MVS.²⁰ If communists aimed to lead the revolutionary struggle they had to possess

a "fighting army," not merely conduct isolated battles in Social Democratic unions. He concluded defiantly, saying,

we shall submit to this decision, regardless of our conviction that there will come a time when it will be regretted.²¹

Despite this verbal acquiescence, nothing changed in the years 1925-1927. At the second KSČ congress in October and November 1924 Hais repeated his argument that the Red Unions should be strengthened, but agreed with the resolution, which read "members and sympathisers of the party do not have the right to leave . . ." reformist unions. The Comintern representative, Manuilsky, affirmed that the principal task was the renewal of trade union unity, and as a warning to dissenting Red Unionists added, ". . . in Czechoslovakia we have the impression that among individual leading comrades there has appeared the embryo of organisational fetishism," a dangerous phenomenon. The main concern was *not* the preservation of the Red Unions, as Hais and many others believed, but union unity achieved through the pressure of the masses from below. Manuilsky said that such work had been neglected by the MVS and KSČ.²²

The second congress was soon followed by a conference of MVS and KSČ representatives, which yet again asserted that all revolutionary workers should stay in reformist unions.²³ Despite this continual pressure, successive congress and conference resolutions, party proclamations and press articles reveal that the problem remained totally unresolved. Both the third and fourth party congresses attempted unsuccessfully to change the line adopted by the MVS leadership. The trade union thesis ratified by the third congress in September 1925 reaffirmed that "the transfer of individuals or groups from reformist union organisations cannot be permitted." Transfer could only be effected if union groups would otherwise drift into non-organisation. "The strongest disciplinary measures" would be taken against anyone ignoring this decree, but this proved to be an ineffectual deterrent. Kohn stated that communists had to remain in Social Democratic unions in order not to be detached from the working masses and added significantly, "anyone who obstructs this does not understand the word Bolshevisation."²⁴

The fourth KSČ congress in March 1927 discussed the trade union issue in some detail. Zápotocký, delivering the main address, rejected

the splitting up of OSČ unions. On the contrary, fraction work *within* reformist organisations was required to turn the workers against their leaders and towards the MVS. The congress resolution made the party's position crystal clear. "Attempts to transfer members from reformist to Red unions must be eradicated as decisively as possible." Hais, defiant as ever, stood his ground.

We contend that communists in reformist unions who do not engage in fraction work only pay money needlessly to the reformists, who then use it against the revolutionary workers' movement.

Furthermore, even when communists did engage in secret fraction work, like Kučera and Mazouch in the Union of Metalworkers, they were expelled.²⁵

Press campaigns launched at the end of 1924 and beginning of 1925 likewise failed to solve the problem. The only concession was to force *Dělník* into a purely formal renunciation of the MVS standpoint. Following the Comintern line, the campaigns reasserted the necessity of Leninist principles in trade union work. *Rudé právo* argued that the ideal was not parallel Red and Social Democratic unions, but a united union organisation in which revolutionary workers would enjoy decisive influence.²⁶ One month later in January 1925, the KSČ daily exhorted, "Workers! Do not leave Amsterdam trade union organisations! Revolutionise them!"²⁷ *Dělník*, perhaps under pressure from the party or perhaps cunningly diverting it, responded by reluctantly calling on workers to develop work in Social Democratic unions. In an effort to defend the MVS line, however, the journal claimed, "it is obvious that many honest revolutionary workers still do not understand the necessity of this tactic" The fight against the reformist "traitors" from within did not:

. . . signify a weakening of the Red Unions, but a strengthening of their influence. Many revolutionary workers think that transference to the Red Unions facilitates our struggle for the unity of the trade union movement. This is incorrect.²⁸

It can only be assumed that this retreat on the part of the MVS was purely tactical, since in practice it did not signal a reversal of its policies.

The party theoretical journal, *Komunistická revue* (The Communist Review), also entered the fray in early 1925. An article by Michal stressed the need for *entering* reformist organisations, not leaving them, with the aim of converting them into organs of struggle against capitalism. "The party cannot support the flight from reformist unions. We are right, not the trade unionists." The comrades in the MVS espoused "incorrect opinions." The Comintern line had not altered, as some people maintained, from the second to the fifth congresses: the aim was still the creation of revolutionary unity.²⁹

The ineffectiveness of the party campaign became evident by the end of February 1925. A conference of MVS section boards resolved that where the reformists had established splinter unions, so-called "yellow unions," the MVS could take in members directly without conflicting with the struggle for unity, so enthusiastically endorsed by the KSČ and Moscow. The task was to "eliminate" these splinter unions and instil a revolutionary consciousness in other OSČ organisations.³⁰ These "yellow unions" had been formed in the chemical, agricultural and timber industries in 1921 and 1922 and were vitally important for the MVS leadership as all three were backbones of the Red trade union movement. An even stronger oppositionist stance was taken by Arno Hais in a series of articles in *Rudý odborář* in the early summer of 1925. Hais was particularly alarmed by the opinions expressed by certain comrades at the second KSČ congress. According to him, they had advocated the idea of consolidating the Red Unions at their present level by not admitting workers from reformist unions. He feared that this policy at a time of great membership fluctuation would condemn the MVS to "gradual extinction" and would thus be "sheer suicide." Hais said that such "absurdities" as the belief that "... strong and powerful Red Unions are really an obstacle to the achievement of unity," had been propagated by some comrades since the second congress.³¹

In his second contribution, Hais argued that the policy of work within reformist unions had proved to be unsuccessful in the years 1922-1925, and claimed that views such as those held by Heller, a German-Czech communist who demanded an absolute ban on the transfer of members, would bring "chaos" into the party's trade union policy. Heller maintained that continued transfer of workers would lead to the danger of a "break with our party," a statement which demonstrated the profundity of the divisions on this controversial issue.³²

These divisions had been abundantly displayed at the fifth enlarged ECCI plenum in March and April, 1925.³³ A number of KSČ spokesmen attacked the MVS leadership, among them Neurath, who stated in the special Czechoslovak Commission that the party had "... achieved only academic results" on the trade union question. He took the serious step of likening Josef Hais to Schumacher, and accused the former of regarding the Comintern line as incorrect and incompetent. Neurath concluded that there should be a definitive end to all splitting activities,³⁴ since Bolshevisation meant forging closer contact with Social Democratic and non-unionised workers.³⁵ Čeněk Hruška went even further in his criticism saying,

we are compelled to fight the trade union secretaries of the I.W.U. [MVS] to get them to hold to the decisions of the CI [Comintern].³⁶

Throughout 1925 the gulf between the party and the MVS remained unbreached. Union leaders were undaunted in the face of increasing party pressure. In October, Josef Hais reiterated his belief that only strong Red Unions could force the Social Democrats into negotiations for unity.

In my opinion, we need to enlist into the Red Unions all workers who support the MVS, regardless of which organisation they leave.³⁷

This idea was explicitly rejected by a leading party official, Viktor Stern, who wrote in *Komunistická revue* that "many comrades systematically encourage the notion of leaving reformist unions . . .," including the leaders of the Red trade union movement. Red Unions were to be strengthened not by transferring workers, but by recruiting non-organised workers.³⁸

The fact that the MVS was able to resist this pressure can be seen partly from these figures. According to Kohn, at the beginning of 1926 the KSČ had approximately 50,000 to 55,000 members in the Red Unions, but only 25,000 in the reformist unions, 15,000 of these in the *Gewerkschaftsbund* and 10,000 in the OSČ out of a combined total of 583,040. Communists had a meagre 1:100 ratio in certain split OSČ unions, suggesting that the transfer policy in "yellow unions" had been widespread.³⁹

These figures were updated by the fourth party congress report and later by Osip Pyatnitsky, the head of the ECCI Orgburo. It was claimed

that at the end of 1926 a total of 45,575 party members were unionised, of whom only 9,101 were in Social Democratic organisations, 821 in the ČOD National Socialist unions, and none at all in Catholic unions. A mere 35,653 party members belonged to Red Unions out of a total of 196,509.⁴⁰

If one regards these two sets of figures as accurate, the number of communists in reformist unions had dropped by as much as 60 percent in one year. At the opposite extreme, the congress report maintained that there had been only a five percent drop.⁴¹ The truth probably lies somewhere in the middle, as illustrated by the figures of the Comintern official, Reinhardt. He calculated that the KSČ had 14,796 members in Amsterdam unions at the end of 1925, thus making a decrease of 38 percent in the period December 1925 to December 1926.⁴²

Further proof of the extent to which the transfer policy was carried out is provided by a regional MVS report from Brno dated January 1927. The document reveals that throughout the years 1923-1926, the local commission had undertaken a campaign to recruit revolutionary members from among those workers dissatisfied with the OSČ, as well as from the ranks of the non-unionised.⁴³ Hence, precisely at a time when Moscow was emphasising work within all non-communist unions, the MVS was withdrawing revolutionary workers from reformist organisations.

Why was this policy implemented in direct opposition to party and Profintern instructions? Viktor Stern provided one answer in an article written in February 1926. He acknowledged that the idea that revolutionary workers could achieve nothing in reformist unions and should therefore join the Red Unions had deep roots among the mass of communist workers. It was consciously propagated by many shop-stewards and even "leading comrades."⁴⁴ Thus, Moscow's attempt to force Czechoslovak communist trade unionists to remain in reformist organisations met with stiff opposition not only from the MVS executive, but also from *the majority of revolutionary workers*. The Profintern faced a solid wall of resistance from the highest to the lowest levels of the Red Unions. Ordinary communist workers failed to see the logic of a concept which led to expulsion from OSČ unions and to possible dismissal should the factory management discover secret communist fractions. Moreover, the KSČ, which endeavoured at least verbally to pursue Moscow's line was strangely inactive. It appears that the party leadership, itself racked

by internal dissension, was reluctant to rock the shaky communist boat, being more concerned to patch up the divided ranks than to force a united line on the MVS.⁴⁵ The leadership of the MVS fought for, and won, a sufficient degree of autonomy to adopt a policy which was in contempt of Moscow and the party.

Union leaders, above all Josef and Arno Hais, were determined to strengthen the Red Union movement at all costs in order to create a mass centre, "a united army," as a counterweight to the OSČ. The ultimate aim was to compel the Social Democrats into joint action and eventual reunification by sheer numerical strength. Therefore all communists and left-wing sympathisers had to be drawn into the Red Unions. The Haises repeatedly stated that only a strong MVS could bring about the united front and unification.⁴⁶ In addition, they remained adamantly opposed to revolutionary workers paying thousands of crowns to the reformists in the form of union dues. Josef Hais made his feelings clear at successive party congresses and even at the third Profintern congress in July 1924. Such a drain on resources merely worsened the already precarious financial state of the MVS and was seen as senseless, harmful and ultimately counter-productive. Finally, the MVS executive was convinced that the tactic of working within reformist organisations would result in the expulsion of communists. Hájek, later a staunch defender of Profintern methods, wrote in May 1924 that in practice the policy of capturing Social Democratic unions from within was extremely difficult, if not self-defeating, since the reformists simply split those unions where revolutionaries became powerful.⁴⁷

These objections on the part of the MVS leaders amounted to a fundamental misconception and misapplication of united front tactics. The emphasis on strengthening the Red Unions to the detriment of work in non-communist organisations represented a sectarian approach to the entire issue of unity. The goal of the united front was to convert a majority of workers to revolutionary principles by direct contact with communist policies and methods in the plants and mines. By withdrawing communists from reformist unions the MVS leadership sabotaged this aim by divorcing and isolating revolutionary workers from their Social Democratic brothers. In my opinion, Profintern's insistence on remaining and working in reformist unions was in essence a correct policy, albeit one most difficult to implement in existing conditions. In this

instance, the attempts of the Red Unionists to pursue an autonomous line did little to improve the chances of renewed unity in the Czech labour movement.

Communist Fraction Work

The formation and function of communist fractions in the trade union movement was the logical extension of the policy of remaining in non-communist unions and hence was a primary component of the united front tactic. Therefore, the question of fraction activity in Czechoslovakia was sure to be problematical, as elsewhere in Europe.⁴⁸ Moscow began to place special emphasis on fraction work from early 1924 as the idea of Bolshevisation gradually took shape. Before this time the creation of fractions had been considered less urgent, although the third Comintern congress in July 1921 had stressed that communist cells were vital in all non-party institutions.⁴⁹ Neither the fourth congress nor the second Profintern congress in November and December 1922 adopted specific resolutions on the subject. Similarly, in June 1923 the third enlarged ECCI plenum resolution on the trade union issue dealt with fractions only in passing, stating that every member of the Comintern was obliged "to join his appropriate trade union organization and to work actively in the communist fraction in that union" Not until January 1924 did the Comintern elaborate detailed instructions for fractions in workers' organisations. The preamble declared that,

The question of communist fractions in non-party organisations is closely connected with the need for communist parties to establish their influence over the broad non-party masses.

Fractions were agencies for pursuing this goal. They were to be set up in all worker and peasant bodies where at least three communists were present. Trade union fractions were subordinate to the town party branch and its committee, and were strictly to carry out party directives. The fraction had to report on its work to the relevant party organs, ". . . which lay down the tactics and the political line for the future activity of the fraction." It was conceded that,

in internal matters and current work the fraction is autonomous. The party authorities should not interfere in the daily work of the fraction⁵⁰

In practice, however, the delicate balance between party supervision and fraction autonomy often tipped in favour of the former. The primary aim was to increase communist influence in non-party environments, to maintain close contact with the working masses and ultimately to lead them toward a revolutionary struggle against capitalist society.

In Czechoslovakia, the most concrete theoretical definition of fraction activity was provided by a resolution of the third party congress in September 1925. Party members were instructed to create fractions in all union organisations, be they Red, reformist or reactionary. They were to be established in all local, district and regional groups and committees and in all higher union organs, including the board of the MVS, the leading bodies of MVS sections and the central headquarters of reformist and reactionary unions. Their task was to build up leftist strongholds, composed of communists and other adherents of union unity, in every factory union group. Once these organs came under communist control, they were to merge locally, regionally and nationally in committees of trade union unity. The KSČ, following Comintern edicts, emphasised that fractions were to implement the party line persistently, and therefore their members should seek orders from the relevant party bodies before important matters of principle or tactics were resolved. The decisions of these organs were binding on all fraction members. Moreover, the party was empowered to dispatch its representatives to work within the fraction at any time should the need arise. The fundamental relationship between the two was thus quite evident: "communist fractions in trade union organisations are subordinate to the immediate leadership of relevant party organs." This very formulation was to be a major bone of contention between the KSČ and MVS executives.⁵¹

Although fraction work took on greater significance from 1924, party representatives from early 1923 onwards had used every opportunity to urge the formation of fractions. Already at the first party congress in February 1923 a resolution had been adopted which declared that fractions were to be established by elected local party organisers (*důvěrníci*), who were to ensure that work was executed according to party directives.

Kohn explicitly stated that fractions should be formed in all factories.⁵² He reiterated this demand at an all-trade union conference on 10 June, saying that party members were duty bound to develop fractional activity.⁵³ Only in this way could communists exert influence on Social Democratic workers, since the reformists held the union apparatus in their hands.⁵⁴

The MVS response to these exhortations was less than enthusiastic. The idea of party organisers managing fraction work aroused the concern of *Rudý odborář*:

... the apparatus of communist trade union organisers is a political apparatus. . . . These people cannot appropriate the rights of trade union bodies.⁵⁵

Hence, from the very start of the controversy surrounding fraction work the MVS leaders expressed their wariness of party interference in what they perceived as their domain. This cautious attitude grew throughout the 1920s, its corollary being a lack of noticeable progress in fraction work, as successive party officials observed. Zápotocký admitted at the third ECCI plenum in June 1923 that in Czechoslovakia such work was not "fully developed," but he endeavoured to alleviate this shortcoming by praising the cooperation between the KSČ and MVS. He contended that, "... the Red Unions have totally supported the party's action. . . ."⁵⁶ Others were somewhat less conciliatory. Doležal complained that the KSČ had no fractions or cells in Amsterdam organisations.⁵⁷ This theme was reinforced by Kohn, who affirmed that fraction work had hardly begun and this despite the decrees of the first party congress.⁵⁸

The campaign gathered pace in 1924. A Communist Party national conference in May commended those comrades who submitted to party orders on fraction and propaganda work in reformist and reactionary unions. The resolution added ominously that fractions were an "absolute necessity" in Red Unions.⁵⁹ The most stringent injunctions came from Moscow. In an article on the forthcoming fifth Comintern congress, Lozovsky demanded the creation of what he termed party nuclei in all factories and plants.⁶⁰ When introducing the congress thesis on the trade union question, he described the failure to form fractions in reformist organisations as a general malaise.⁶¹ The adopted resolution raised the issue of fractions to one of utmost importance:

The central task of all communist parties is to build fighting fractions, beginning with the factory . . . *and to strengthen the control of party organizations over the activities of individual members and particularly over trade union fractions.*

Under the heading "The Weaknesses of Our Work," the resolution listed several significant failings:

1. In many countries there are no communist fractions; where they exist they have been created from above.
2. The failure to form fractions in organizations led by communists or communist sympathizers.
3. The failure to form fractions in reformist unions when there are parallel revolutionary unions (France).
12. Underestimation of the importance of trade union work⁶²

All these examples were applicable to Czechoslovakia, and the pressure mounted at the third Profintern congress which convened immediately after the Comintern gathering.

At this forum, Kohn repeated his call for the creation of fractions in both reformist and Red Unions, a demand which up till then had not been properly understood by communist trade unionists.⁶³ Josef Hais agreed that it was necessary to build cells in reformist unions, but felt that only selected comrades, capable of implementing communist policies, were suitable for fraction work. He argued that not every individual worker could be considered a cell.⁶⁴ Despite Hais's formal acquiescence, the decisions of the international congresses of the summer of 1924 did not radically alter the situation in Czechoslovakia. The following months demonstrated that the resistance to the formation of fractions was as strong as ever.

The second party congress in the autumn of 1924 repeated the now familiar appeal for fraction activity.

Fraction work is an unconditional duty of all members in all union organisations—Red, reformist and reactionary . . . Communist fractions adopt the standpoints of the Communist Party in all trade unions and in all questions of economic activity, and systematically gain non-communist members for these standpoints. This

is also valid for fraction work in Red Unions, since not all members are communists. . . . Red trade union functionaries should submit to party discipline. The party is guaranteed influence in Red organisations only when there are communist fractions in them, as union officials can be influenced by that party of the membership which is not controlled by the KSČ.⁶⁵

This final section on work in Red Unions is particularly noteworthy, since the KSČ quite openly displayed its fear that MVS officials could become prey to non-communist influences and resist party directives. To prevent this from occurring solid, communist fractions were essential.

The resolution of the second congress received scant coverage in the MVS press. Indeed, throughout the period 1923-1927, *Dělník* and *Rudý odborář* paid little attention to the problem of fraction work in non-communist unions, preferring to emphasise the strengthening of the MVS. The sole exception was Rudolf Hájek, who came out in favour of fractions in an article published soon after the second party congress. He managed cleverly to combine both the KSČ and MVS positions by asserting that fraction work would benefit the aim of strengthening the MVS, because it would pressurise the reformist leaders into joint undertakings and eventual unification.⁶⁶ A more representative viewpoint was given by Arno Hais in June 1925. He claimed that Red Unionists did not resist fraction work in principle, but rather because it “. . . is still only on paper. It is not being carried out in reality.”⁶⁷ One gathers from this comment that Hais considered fraction work a party, rather than a trade union, affair. As the party had failed to implement fraction activity outside the union movement, why should the MVS be called to task? Josef Hais likewise doubted the practical value of fraction work. Speaking at the third KSČ congress, he argued that it had achieved nothing in the previous two years. “This work will produce no results. . . since the reformists are clever enough to take counter-measures against us.” Intelligent individuals, not a “bunch” (*houf*) of workers who had no idea what a fraction was, must work in reformist unions, because whole groups, once exposed, would be driven out of the factory. He concluded with these telling words: “it is not our duty to form fractions, but the duty of the Communist Party.”⁶⁸

There is evidence to suggest that the Haises were not alone in their opposition to fraction work. Their ideas received tangible backing from regional MVS officials, the Brno area being particularly vehement in its support. At a stormy meeting of MVS secretaries in early September, 1926, Kohn's passionate defence of fractions was greeted with stiff resistance by the local south Moravian unionists. The chairman of the meeting, Hosičky, reminded Kohn that he had spoken in Brno once before on the subject of fractions, but nothing had been accomplished since there was "an absence of goodwill" for this kind of activity. A certain Tichý demanded that fractions should be first established in the party itself, and only then elsewhere. The KSČ should "put its own house in order" before the unions. Musil maintained that fraction work could not be successful as the ground had not been prepared in advance, while Müller admitted that workers had no real knowledge of party directives and of the situation as a whole.⁶⁹ This is a highly significant point in that Red Union officials and members were most confused by the plethora of instructions and new terms emanating from party headquarters, terms like "fraction" (*frakce*), "cell" (*buňka*), one of the main reasons why the MVS and KSČ were slow to implement Moscow's line was the fact that the membership and *apparatchiki* simply failed to have a firm grasp of the meaning and practical application of these new concepts.

Four months after this meeting in Brno, the regional MVS secretariat reported that it had "great difficulties" in following Profintern and MVS orders, because "many comrades" doubted the correctness of the official line on trade union unity.⁷⁰ Many communists were reluctant to form fractions as membership in them was often regarded by employers as sufficient grounds for dismissal.⁷¹ At the Karlín conference of MVS and KSČ representatives in December 1924, Josef Hais cited this as a reason for the inactivity of fractions.⁷² Furthermore, Krejčí from Kladno said at the Organisational Conference of the Comintern in March 1925 that workers in his region feared "dismissal and persecution" on account of the creation of party cells in the factories.⁷³ A Comintern spokesman, Wille, recognised that this was happening, but blamed it on the fact that factory groups were "far too open."⁷⁴ It seems clear that the worker's fear for his livelihood was paramount and that the often vague notions from Moscow and the party centre were secondary in his considerations.

The resistance to fraction work was not only confined to MVS members. According to Zápotocký, many party people too were suspicious. "In Czechoslovakia," he said in March 1925, "the problem of fractions in the trade unions . . . is very complicated." After the split in the OSČ,

the opinion prevailed in the membership [of the KSČ] that as we have our own trade unions, we need not organise fractions in the Amsterdam unions. It was only slowly that we succeeded and are succeeding in liquidating this wrong viewpoint in the membership.⁷⁵

At the same meeting, the Organisational Conference, Čeněk Hruška complained that the Prague party district organisation had thirty to forty fractions in local trade unions, but none were active. Reorganisation of the party "... was greatly impeded by the passivity of the members."⁷⁶ Harus reported that,

in our efforts to form fractions we meet with the opposition of many officials, both of the Party and the Red Trade Unions.⁷⁷

As Hruška stated at the fifth enlarged ECCI plenum, "fractional work in the trade unions is . . . still in the early stages."⁷⁸

This situation remained fundamentally unchanged throughout the period 1925 to 1927. There are numerous examples in the communist press demonstrating that party leftists were fighting an uphill struggle against the continued resistance of the Red Unionists. Such staunch "Bolshevisers" as Kohn, Harus and Stern constantly reprimanded the MVS leadership and exhorted it to greater efforts. For instance, at the sixth enlarged ECCI plenum in March, 1926, Kohn berated those communist unionists who failed to comprehend the leading role of the party in trade union affairs and the necessity of fraction work in all unions. Many were opponents of fraction activity, he admitted, and even after a "serious ideological struggle" some were still not fully convinced of the correctness of this line.⁷⁹ At the same meeting, Lozovsky saw the neglect of communist fraction work in both reformist and Red Unions as the main deficiency in Czechoslovakia. There was also a lack of work in National Socialist and National Democratic organisations.⁸⁰ These were

major shortcomings given the rules laid down in the Bolshevisation theses of April 1925.⁸¹ The ideas embodied in these theses were re-endorsed by the sixth plenum, which demanded work in all trade union tendencies, Red, Amsterdam, syndicalist, Christian or Fascist.⁸² Yet in Reinhardt's opinion, the situation in Czechoslovakia was far from satisfactory. In the largest OSČ union, the metalworkers, fraction work was not consolidated, allowing Hampl to dominate the organisation. Fractions were only just beginning to function in German reformist unions, and in National Socialist organisations the situation was even worse. Finally, although one fifth of the Red Union membership was communist, fraction work did not correspond to this level.⁸³

The problem went deeper than merely the non-implementation of fraction work. Harus had stated in April 1925 that,

it is absolutely impossible for the communist party to surrender its influence on the Red trade unions. On the contrary, the greater the struggle, the greater the influence That is why the question of fractions is one of the most important questions.⁸⁴

Kohn picked up on this theme in January 1926, saying the influence of the KSČ in the Red Unions was insufficient precisely because of the lack of communist fractions.⁸⁵ Stern repeated this idea two weeks later, demanding the creation of fractions in Red Unions in order to prevent disasters like the one in the Union of Builders, which under Karel Tetenka had broken its affiliation with the MVS in mid 1925.⁸⁶ It is clear from these comments that party leftists were fearful of Red Union autonomy. The typical reason given why fractions had not been formed in Red Unions was the belief that as these organisations were *per se* "in the hands of communists," there was no need to build communist fractions. Such arguments carried little weight in leftist circles.⁸⁷

The most concentrated attack on Red Union inactivity was launched by Zápotocký in his main address on the trade union question to the fourth party congress in March 1927. Already in January of that year he had given warning of the onslaught to come, but he had developed his theme considerably by the time of the congress.⁸⁸ He started by saying faction work had progressed slowly owing to the old traditions of the non-politicisation of trade unions. The idea that fractions were

unworkable in reformist organisations and superfluous in Red Unions was "very strong in our ranks." This had to be fought against "most decisively." Since fraction work in reformist and reactionary unions was difficult to implement, many people took the comfortable way out and fled from these organisations into the Red Unions. "Our comrades are lacking persistence, patience and diligence in fraction work." Radical phraseology was not enough. There had to be real, detailed work. As an example of the Red Unions' negative attitude, Zápotocký bemoaned the fact that the great majority of the 9,922 party members in reformist organisations performed no fraction duties whatsoever. The excuse was always, "if I did, I would be expelled." He concluded somewhat optimistically that this would not be the case if communists proved to be good workers, since then the other employees would lend their support. As far as the Red Unions were concerned, communists were "duty bound" to establish fractions "in order to carry out the correct directives on trade union tactics." These unions were not to be considered organs of the party, but were to enjoy "complete self-management and administrative independence." Notwithstanding this, the KSČ was to decide on union tactics, while the MVS should content itself with purely internal union affairs.⁸⁹ Zápotocký gave a clear warning here that the party's influence on a theoretically non-party institution had to be exerted through communist fractions.

The congress resolution on the trade union issue reflected Zápotocký's concerns. It demanded that fraction work be carried out in practice, not merely in words, in both reformist and Red Unions. The overall aim was not to split unions or transfer members from Amsterdam to MVS organisations, but to convince workers in reformist bodies of the necessity of strengthening the fighting capacity of the working class, to eliminate harmful, opportunist tendencies, and to place the trade union movement on a fighting, class basis.⁹⁰

Once again, however, the stern words and "obligatory" decrees of a party congress went unheeded. By November 1927 Kohn, writing specifically on the issue of factions, maintained that they had still not been introduced on a wide enough scale. Furthermore, and most significant given later developments, he argued that fraction workers did not comprehend the full range of their duties, which by that time included celebrations of the October Revolution, warnings about the danger of war

against the U.S.S.R. and the sending of delegations to Soviet Russia.⁹¹ Klement Gottwald added his up-and-coming voice to the chorus by equating the lack of fraction work with the emphasis which the MVS leaders placed on the united front from above, rather than from below, directly among the workers in the factories.⁹²

Gottwald had hit at the heart of the dispute between the Red Unionists and the party leftists. For the latter, the MVS leaders had committed the unforgivable sin of misinterpreting and misapplying the fundamental Leninist tenets of communist work in the trade unions and the basic principles of the united front from below. The Comintern and Profintern had from mid 1924 repeatedly emphasised the necessity of work *in all* trade unions with the aim of capturing the majority of members from below through communist fractions and committees of unity. This idea was an integral component of the Bolshevisation theses adopted in April 1925.⁹³ By failing to perceive the utmost significance of remaining and forming fractions within Social Democratic unions, the MVS leaders revealed their opposition to Bolshevisation and by extension to Leninist tactics in the trade union movement. The fact that the MVS was able to resist leftist pressure demonstrates that Hais and his colleagues had sufficient authority to delay or even prevent measures which they considered harmful to the Red trade union movement. This was also true in the case of the formation of fractions within the Red Unions themselves. Hais was able to block the creation of fractions in the organs of the MVS, fearing party control over union affairs on a local, regional and national basis.

This did not mean that union leaders could blatantly ignore party directives. On several occasions they paid lip service to the need for fractions, but in practice did little or nothing.⁹⁴ The refusal to build up a system of fractions was a logical extension of the decision to transfer communist unionists from OSČ to MVS organisations. Given the fact that the MVS leaders wanted to strengthen the Red Unions by attracting into their ranks as many communist sympathisers as possible, fraction work in Social Democratic, National Socialist, Christian and National Democratic unions seemed superfluous, if not disruptive.

Another cause of the failure of fraction activity in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere was the ineptitude of party leaders responsible for trade union affairs. Pyatnitsky noted that these comrades did not support and

direct fraction work in the correct manner.⁹⁵ The KSČ leadership was not prepared to bring about an open rift in the communist movement over the issue of fractions and work in non-communist unions. The situation in the world communist movement up to 1927 had not reached the point where total obedience to Moscow was paramount. Deviations were still permitted in practice, if not in theory. Thus the “rightist dangers” in the KSČ were tolerated within bounds, leaving the MVS strangely “protected” by a Communist Party increasingly divided and fearful of further, open schisms.

Moreover, the passivity of MVS local and regional secretaries, functionaries and members greatly dampened any official party enthusiasm for fraction work. Fractions were seen as party, not union, organs and what is more were regarded with much suspicion, since employers often used membership in them as a pretext for dismissing trouble-makers. Few Czech workers, it seems, were willing to risk their livelihoods for a vague, revolutionary notion, which most of them barely understood. In addition, the clandestine activity inherent in fraction work repelled the vast majority of Czech workers, accustomed as they were to legal trade unionism. Comintern and Profintern leaders in faraway Moscow appeared hardly aware of such considerations, and thus were guilty of riding roughshod over local conditions and characteristics.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MVS RELATIONS WITH THE KSČ AND THE MOSCOW INTERNATIONALS II

The antagonisms between the MVS and KSČ were not limited to the problems of work within non-communist trade unions. The long-standing question of the organisational structure of the MVS itself was also an important bone of contention. Discontent with the highly centralised nature of the MVS was rife within the Red union movement, and this opposition continued to exist after the dispute with the independent unions in 1924 and 1925. The decentralisation measures demanded by the Profintern and KSČ were only partially, and even then reluctantly, implemented by the MVS leadership. In addition, party leftists became increasingly critical of the financial set up of the MVS, the fluctuation in membership, the bureaucratisation and passivity of the union apparatus and the personal rule of Josef Hais. Another area of discord was the MVS leadership's "incorrect" formulation of the united front tactic and strike strategy, based on an over-estimation of the united front "from above." The most important issue, however, and the one which struck at the heart of all the disputes between the MVS and the KSČ was the question of party interference in union affairs. Relations between Red Unionists and the KSČ trade union department under Rudolf Kohn became so strained that some MVS leaders were accused of harbouring "liquidationist tendencies," i.e. of propounding the idea of trade union

autonomy from the party. It is precisely in this problem that one can detect the main cause of the schism in the years 1928-1929.

Organisational Problems

As we have seen, the strictly centralised organisational structure of the MVS adopted at its founding congress in October 1922 resulted in countless problems for the Red trade union movement. As a consequence of the "united union" form of organisation, the so-called independent unions, the builders, woodworkers and transport workers, refused to sanction a merger with the MVS centre in opposition to Profintern directives. Furthermore, the Union of Builders was acrimoniously split in the years 1925-1926, one part of the membership under Tetenka eventually rejoining the OSČ, the other affiliating to the MVS in July 1926. The wood and transport workers' unions remained united, but at no time became MVS sections. To this extent, one can argue that the intransigence of the MVS leadership and its stubborn opposition to any meaningful decentralisation helped to prevent the unification of the Red Unions and harmed their development.

The Profintern pursued a dual line in this dispute. While directing the independent unions to merge with the MVS, Moscow was also adamant that the central body should undertake measures that would guarantee freedom of movement to individual member sections, as demanded by the independents. The most striking example of this decentralisation drive was the letter sent on 25 November 1925 to the second MVS congress, in which the Profintern Executive stated quite plainly that sections should be autonomous. "The saddest thing for the revolutionary trade union movement would be the suppression of the sections' initiative," which could lead to the "organisational death" of the entire union. According to the letter, "the aim of the MVS is to amalgamate the broad financial and organisational autonomy of sections with a centralised struggle." Each member section should live its own life and not be directed from above. "The MVS apparatus . . . cannot and should not supersede section organs, which are elected on the basis of trade union democracy."¹ The second and third party congresses had likewise unequivocally demanded changes in the organisational statutes of the MVS aimed at greater decentralisation as a means of encouraging the unification of the Red Unions.²

It is of vital significance that in the face of this concerted campaign, the MVS leaders were able to effectively prevent any fundamental change in the organisational structure of the union. In other words, the Hais leadership was strong enough to disregard not only the opinions of the independents, but also, and much more importantly, the directives of the Profintern and the KSČ. This was not done blatantly and obviously. At a conference of section leaders on 20 December 1925 Hais "absolutely agreed with the general line" of the Profintern letter, but affirmed that the proposals put forward by the MVS central board answered the need for greater section autonomy.³ Three days earlier he had written an article entitled *Why do we insist on the centralised leadership of the MVS?*, in which he stated that "the centralised MVS apparatus has fully proved itself. Apart from a few internal changes, it will not be necessary to alter anything fundamentally."⁴ Arno Hais also staunchly defended the existing structure:

. . . the organisational form of the MVS does not need to be changed fundamentally Even in future we shall insist on the centralised form, as decided upon at our first all-trade union congress.⁵

Hájek too played the same tune saying, "sections have . . . complete organisational autonomy and autonomy of action"⁶

The congress itself was a scene of sharp debate, but little of concrete value was achieved. The German textile delegates, Marvan, Baier, Steinz and Bürger, launched a concerted attack on the MVS structure and methods of work. Marvan, having first rejected the claim that the German workers were an opposition and hence could not be "dumped into the same basket as the independent unions," argued that he and his colleagues understood the term "centralisation" differently to Hais. He did not demand decentralisation, but a guarantee that each section be afforded an opportunity to develop its own individual, revolutionary strength. Thanks to the degree of autonomy that the Liberec textile section enjoyed, it continued to grow, even after the merger with the Czechs in July 1925. Baier, an old-time foe of MVS centralisation, was more forthright in his criticisms. He stated flatly that the union centre was over-centralised and wasteful of funds on administrative details. He concluded that there was insufficient autonomy for member sections. Steinz reiterated

this theme and considered the opinions of the prosperous and relatively successful Liberec section more valid than those of the MVS board. The centre's job was to guarantee the freedom of individual sections.⁷

Bürger continued the attack by criticising Hais personally. He did not "act like a real leader of the Red Unions," despite the fact that the Czech comrades believed in him completely. "We decide, not Hais." He went on by pointing to the bureaucratisation of the MVS, saying that the union issued 450 letters a day which meant that the centre was too concerned with pettiness to follow the economic and political struggles of the working class.⁸ Although this was a powerful denunciation of the existing system, the German delegates remained in a small minority and did not receive official blessing from either the KSČ or Profintern. This latter fact is noteworthy since it suggests that Moscow was not seriously interested in large-scale decentralisation.

In his reply, Hais adopted a slightly defensive tone, claiming that not one section had ever complained of the denial of its rights or any limitations on its authority. "The organisational form of the MVS should not be an obstacle to unity . . .," although clearly it was. "We are in favour of section independence . . .," but this had existed for a long time. If deemed necessary, the leadership was willing to implement changes against centralism, but fundamental changes were out of the question. Earlier in the congress, Hais had declared that although the formation of an all-trade union was a "step in the dark" organisationally, it had been a success. He was convinced that "... a centralised organisation is best." He dismissed his German opponents by stating that those people who talked of decentralisation were "inexperienced" and had never worked in the MVS centre. Hais was not isolated in his views and received the backing of the majority of Czech delegates.⁹ Nevertheless, one or two delegates from the glass and miners' sections wanted to see greater authority for member unions.¹⁰

The congress ratified only two minor alterations in the MVS organisational structure. The main concession was the formal recognition that sections should retain 25 percent of their dues for their own independent use, the rest being centrally controlled and allocated.¹¹ It was also accepted that each section should be represented on the MVS board in proportion to its membership. Every section had a right to one representative, while those with over 10,000 members received two, and those with over

20,000 had three.¹² Both of these amendments had been demanded by the third Profintern congress in July 1924.¹³

Moscow's spokesman, Reinhardt, whose speech was read by Kohn *in absentia*, welcomed the changes and seemed satisfied that the unification of the Red Unions had been brought a step nearer to fruition. Indeed, his main concern was the rapid merger of the independent unions with the MVS, rather than decentralisation.¹⁴ Hais must have been highly content with the outcome of the congress and the support from Reinhardt. Predictably, the congress report fully endorsed the united union form of organisation and rejected the "theoretical" criticisms of its adversaries.¹⁵ More relevantly, the KSČ also voiced satisfaction with the congress proceedings.¹⁶ Some party leftists, however, did not concur. Stern dampened the celebrations by insisting that "the greatest antagonisms" existed not only within the MVS, but also between the union leadership and the Profintern and KSČ. He was forced to agree reluctantly that the congress had solved most of the problems, but this may well have been an example of what can be termed the "ritual of harmony" in communist ranks.¹⁷

Despite the left's evident concern, the problem did appear to have been solved, as the question of the organisational structure of the MVS attracted scant coverage in the communist press throughout 1926. Indeed, the only exception was an optimistic article in *Rudé právo* stating that the MVS "...affords individual sections sufficient freedom and movement to carry out their affairs in a reasonable manner..."¹⁸ The fourth party congress resolution similarly made no mention of MVS centralisation, and Zápotocký in his otherwise critical analysis of the Red Unions virtually ignored the subject. Hais, as expected, praised his union as a new, universally valid form of organisation. Mai, a German textile delegate from Liberec, was far more sceptical. He emphasised that many of the faults of the MVS stemmed from the "organisational form and internal structure of the Red Unions." He proceeded to criticise two closely related phenomena, namely the poor financial situation of the union and the fluctuations in its membership. According to Mai, the solution to the former problem lay in an increase in union dues, which were woefully inadequate, and in improved financial outlay. Up till then, all funds had been used on agitation and organisation. This had to change, he warned. The latter problem, which was to become a major area of concern

to the "new left" in 1928, began to raise eyebrows in 1925. Mai reckoned in that year the MVS gained a total of 57,000 new members, composed of 35,000 non-organised workers, 17,000 Liberec textile workers, and 5,000 from other unions. In addition, in the first half of 1926 a further 40,000 non-organised workers, 9,000 builders and 4,000 workers from other organisations were acquired, which meant a total of 110,000 new members in a year and a half. Despite this, there had been no growth in overall MVS membership. On the contrary, there had been a drop.¹⁹

Hais once again was put on the defensive. He maintained that the centre did not appoint regional trade union secretaries. They were elected locally. He agreed that fluctuation in trade union membership was a problem, but blamed this mainly on unemployment since it was difficult to keep the jobless organised. The raising of union dues was no easy matter either, particularly in low paid branches like the textile industry. The financial crisis in the MVS made the recruitment of new members a vital task.²⁰ Yet this was not being achieved on a broad enough scale, as proved by the recruitment campaign launched in 1926, specifically the "action week" from 20 to 27 October. During this time the MVS was to attract a planned 50,000 new members from the ranks of the non-unionised and the "yellow unions."²¹ The attempt proved largely unsuccessful. The biggest gains came in the Ostrava region (770 new members), Kolín (618), Uherské Hradiště (500), Kladno (484), Plzeň (420) and Brno (398). In many other areas (Tábor, Ústí nad Labem, Klatovy, Třebíč, Mladá Boleslav and Opava) the gains were generally between 100 and 200 new members.²² Judging from these figures, the recruitment drive attracted at most 10,000 to 15,000 members and did not prevent negative fluctuation in overall terms. The MVS membership dropped between 1925 and 1927 from 180,207 to 173,405 to 143,055.²³

Zápotocký noted this failure at the fourth KSČ congress, asserting that the various recruitment actions had been to a large extent inadequate and in many cases even "shameful." This was mainly because "our organisational apparatus carries out all actions too mechanically and, I would say, only on paper." Union functionaries were prepared only to distribute pamphlets, posters and appeals, but not to engage in personal agitation and explanation. They simply lacked conviction. "A bad revolutionary is one who shies away from ordinary, detailed daily work in the trade unions . . ." According to Zápotocký what was needed, and by

implication what had been lacking before, was "persistent, systematic and permanent work."²⁴ The bureaucratic tendencies in the MVS apparatus and the passivity of members and officials alike were clearly perceived as major drawbacks, and in the years 1927-1929 overshadowed the question of the organisational structure of the Red Unions.

These tendencies were acknowledged not only by the party, but also by MVS leaders as early as the summer of 1925. In an article entitled *The Bureaucratisation of MVS secretaries!* Arno Hais admitted that "...in certain regions, comrade secretaries carry out their functions too schematically, even bureaucratically, developing no work initiative..." They maintained organisational life by relying on a few meetings and reports. Instead, local secretaries should visit factories and estates and become acquainted with the economic and industrial situation in their areas. They should gain non-organised workers by explaining MVS positions.²⁵ As we have seen, Hais's exhortations had little effect.

The issue of the financial stagnation of the MVS had also been a long-standing area of concern. According to a police report in mid-1923, the Red Unions were in a bad financial situation owing to the non-payment of membership dues.²⁶ At the second MVS congress Josef Hais recognised that the union was far from rich, and said "financial relations are decisive in great movements."²⁷ He insisted on the centralised control of union money, arguing rather weakly that section secretaries had no time to worry about the financial state of their organisations. The central administration should thus deal with all the accounts.²⁸ After the congress, Arno Hais wrote that the majority of members should pay higher dues than hitherto in order to stabilise the situation.²⁹ He complained that many members "...try to pay lower category dues."³⁰ Indeed, it was revealed that most MVS members paid contributions ranging from fifty halers to two crowns, while only 17 percent of dues came from the higher categories of three to six crowns.³¹

A more subjective cause for complaint was Hais's personal control over the affairs of the Red Unions. This problem was rarely discussed openly in the 1920s, at least before 1928, but on one occasion it was raised. The German textile delegate, Steinz, stated at the second MVS congress that absolute authority should be vested in the MVS board, not in "some dictator," an obvious and blatant reference to Hais.³² Criticism of his conduct has subsequently been given as an important

reason for the split, particularly by some of his contemporaries, most notably Rudolf Hájek and Pavel Reiman. The former wrote in his autobiography that the organisational atmosphere in the MVS leadership was stifling. At meetings Hais would bring up "one banal item after another," which would be accepted without debate. Hais automatically signed letters and directives from the centre to the provinces, displaying no interest in the life of union members.³³ In another memoir, Hájek claimed that all power in the MVS resided in the hands of the Chemical section led by J. and A. Hais, Nádvorník, Halík and Černý, all prominent members of the MVS central hierarchy. In practice, this meant that decision on all financial matters, on the leadership of strikes, agitation and on the work of the central apparat were taken by these few individuals. They represented the MVS "before the authorities of the bourgeois republic," signed cheques, oversaw the publication of union journals, and retained legal ownership of the MVS real estate, consisting of two premises on Ječná and Klimentská, and a house in Libeň.³⁴

Václav Král in the introduction to his book *Rudé odbory* characterised Hais as an "...uninspired secretary with a low political outlook whose main worry was the payment of membership dues..." In short, Hais's leadership was "reformist," not revolutionary.³⁵ Pavel Reiman reserved for himself the most personal attack on Hais, calling him "unpleasant and pig-headed" and an "opportunist." Hais looked upon the MVS as:

his own domain and resisted tooth and nail any party interference in trade union policy. He did not submit to party congress decisions. As he dominated the MVS central apparatus, he could do as he wished.³⁶

One should bear in mind that both Hájek and Reiman were ideologically opposed to Hais at the time of the split, and hence attempt to portray him in the worst possible light. Their words should, one suspects, be taken with a medium-sized grain of salt. Having said this, one cannot dismiss their views out of hand. Indeed, there is enough evidence to conclude with some certainty that the leaders of the Chemical section enjoyed undue authority in the highly centralised MVS structure.³⁷ It is even possible that talk of Hais's "dictatorship" and "personal domain" was

not that far from the truth. Hais's character is something of an enigma. Material on him is scarce, but from all accounts he was not a particularly likeable man. He appears to have been rather arrogant and pedantic, qualities which no doubt served him well in his attempts to resist party interference, but ones that must have alienated many of his colleagues. Notwithstanding this, he enjoyed enough popularity and respect to be recalled as leader of the MVS at the time of the schism in March 1929.

The United Front and Strike Strategy

The fourth area of dispute between the MVS and KSČ was the question of the ideological and tactical foundations of the united front, especially with regard to strike strategy. It has been ascertained that the MVS leadership was "guilty" of misinterpreting and misapplying Leninist trade union tactics by rejecting work in reformist and other non-communist organisations. For the party leftists, this failing became apparent also in the union's over-emphasis on the united front from above and in its passivity in economic struggles. One can detect the origins of this ideological rupture in the mid-1920s, although it came to a head only in 1928-1929.

The crux of the problem was the not-so-simple matter of how to interpret correctly Comintern and Profintern directives on the united front. Following the defeat of the uprising in Germany in October 1923, the ECCI decided to shift the focus of the tactic away from the united front from above, stressing the revolutionary, not evolutionary, aims of the tactic. In January 1924 and again in July at the fifth Comintern congress, the united front from below was prescribed as the best method of achieving union unification under communist leadership.³⁸ The united front from above was only possible where simultaneous preparations from below were undertaken. In countries with a split trade union movement, unification was to be achieved by means of "systematic work . . . carried on among the masses . . ." for a unity congress to be convened on the basis of proportional representation and freedom of the ideological struggle.³⁹ Despite this emphasis on work from below, both *Rudý odborář* and *Rudé právo* mentioned the desirability of the united front from above, and tended to play down Moscow's line.⁴⁰

This attitude gained practical expression at the time of the negotiations between the OSČ and MVS metalworker organisations in early 1925. The left feared that the talks were conducted solely "from above," between union leaders, without mobilising the masses for unity on communist terms. Several warnings were issued in the course of 1925 and 1926. The first came from Stern, who demanded more emphasis on work from below within reformist organisations.⁴¹ Four months later the third party congress reminded MVS leaders that union unification could not be implemented merely by discussions with reformist union chairmen.⁴² Soon after, Bubeníček asserted that a merger with Social Democratic unions did not signify support for the reformists, but rather a struggle inside the unions against the betrayers of the working class.⁴³ The most serious criticism, however, came from Lozovsky himself. Speaking at the sixth enlarged ECCI plenum in March 1926, he accused "the upper stratum" of proposing a united front "without drawing in the masses." This was seen as:

...nothing more than a method of mere exchange of letters, not in order to achieve the united front, but to be rid of it. This kind of tactic was noticeable in Czecho-Slovakia on the part of the revolutionary trade unions. . . .⁴⁴

Hájek, distancing himself in hindsight from the very policies he had largely supported in the 1920s, wrote in 1962 that,

...the Hais leadership, which never understood the fighting significance of the united front tactic, soon began to orientate towards a joint advance with the reformist leaders from above. . . .⁴⁵

In spite of these warnings the MVS continued to implement the united front from above. Throughout 1926 and 1927, the MVS central leadership and member sections approached OSČ, ČOD and German Social Democratic unions appealing for joint action on a number of issues, including wages, social insurance and inflation. Two joint meetings were held in 1927, but no lasting unity was found, mainly because the non-communist organisations had no sympathy with the aims of the MVS.⁴⁶ In pursuing these policies, the MVS leaders were increasingly rebuked

for not appreciating the real significance and intention of the united front.⁴⁷ The Profintern letter to the second MVS congress had roundly condemned this misconception of the tactic:

In Czechoslovakia there are still comrades who believe that the united front is only a 'slogan' and that it suffices merely to talk unity without doing anything for its practical realisation.⁴⁸

At the fourth party congress, Zápotocký said that the Red Unions should be aware that real unity could not be propagated simply by the "boisterous repetition of slogans on the unification of unions" Many communist union officials thought that unity was only possible "within the framework of the MVS." As an example, Zápotocký cited a pamphlet disseminated by the Šumperk trade union commission in northern Moravia which called on reformist workers to "demand unification, and if you do not get it, join the MVS." Communists who insisted on unification within the ranks of the MVS were "stupid and unprincipled." In his preoration Zápotocký summed up the feeling in the MVS by stating that there existed a "general over-estimation of the Red Unions" and their significance. Hais himself was called to task for this, as were other comrades. The Red Unions were "temporary organisations" and would be liquidated should unification be achieved at a merger congress. In reply Hájek defended the MVS attitude to the united front.

I must say that in the struggle for unity communists in the Red Unions have acted on the whole correctly and it is impossible to point to a single serious case of fundamental error.

Like Hais and the rest of the MVS leadership, Hájek believed that strong revolutionary trade unions were the best road to unity, thereby seemingly opposing Zápotocký and the party line.⁴⁹

The fundamental cause of the confrontation between the KSČ and MVS was the fact that many union officials underestimated the struggle for unification and the united front from below, and overestimated the significance of the Red Unions and the united front from above. The wish to strengthen the Red Unions as a counterweight to OSČ organisations was quite natural,⁵⁰ but in Czechoslovak conditions this meant

isolation from the mass of workers, since it was combined with a neglect of fraction work in reformist unions. Moscow and the party Bolsheviks could not tolerate this combination. Moreover, in Czechoslovakia every major party had its own affiliated union organisation, an idea deeply embedded particularly in the minds of union leaders.⁵¹ Thus it proved extremely problematical to forge union unity, even though the desire for unification was strong among many workers.⁵²

The difficulties encountered with the united front tactic did not stem merely from an "incorrect" interpretation on the part of the revolutionary trade union leaders, prevailing in Czechoslovakia. As Kreibich stated at the fifth Comintern congress:

on the question of the united front from above or below, the main point is whether the Social Democratic workers are determined to fight⁵³

Without the backing of the mass of Social Democratic and National Socialist workers in the factories, the Red Unions, representing no more than 12 percent of the unionised workforce, could achieve little independently.⁵⁴ In the general absence of labour militancy, especially in the years of stabilisation from 1924-1929, and with political and union divisions deep-rooted in the working class, the Red Union leaders and functionaries more often adopted a direct approach to reformist union leaders "from above," than fight what they perceived as a losing battle in the factories "from below." Given this attitude, criticism from Moscow and the KSČ left was inevitable as the shift to a "class against class" theory began to develop in late 1927 and 1928.

Having propounded this idea as a generality, it would be misleading to say that the MVS leadership relied totally on the united front from above. It did engage in work "from below," but only half-heartedly and rather unsuccessfully. The principal thrust of this activity was the National Workers' Committee (*Celostátní dělnický výbor*), which was founded at a congress of factory council and committee representatives in early October 1924. Of the 1334 delegates, 355 represented OSČ, ČOD, *Gewerkschaftsbund*, Christian Social and independent organisations, the rest (979) coming from the MVS. Josef Kolský from the metalworkers' section was president of the Committee and twenty out

of its thirty-six members belonged to the MVS.⁵⁵ The Committee's aim was to "create a workers' united front from below" in the fight for higher wages and the daily demands of the workforce.⁵⁶ Its organ, *Jednotná fronta* (The United Front), started publication in February 1925, but had little impact on the Czech working class and folded at the end of 1927.⁵⁷ The NWC was ineffectual largely because other trade union centres refused to cooperate with an institution that was seen as a Communist Party body.⁵⁸ Hais, speaking at the Profintern Central Council meeting held between 9 and 11 March 1926, refused to accept criticism of the NWC, arguing that it was working in the factories for joint meetings of all workers, parties and unions.⁵⁹

Even when such joint action was undertaken, as in the case of the textile industry, it was condemned by the new left. The so-called "textile eights" (*textilní osmičky*), which were formed in central and north-eastern Bohemia, were hailed as "the first example of a real united front in Czechoslovakia." An "eight" was a joint committee composed of two representatives from the OSČ, ČOD, Christian Social and MVS textile unions, which negotiated collective agreements and inflation bonuses.⁶⁰ The "eights" aroused the wrath of the left because they negotiated inflation bonuses every year without consulting the workers and "without a struggle."⁶¹ Once again the MVS had misconceived the united front tactic, being content with passive, non-revolutionary action "from above."

Strike strategy was another area in which the Red Unions were found to be lacking. Moscow's line had been clearly outlined at the fourth Comintern congress:

It is the duty of the communist parties of all countries to extend and to deepen the numerous industrial strikes which are breaking out and if possible to let them develop into political . . . struggles.⁶²

The ultimate aim was to mobilise the masses for a struggle against the capitalist state. At the third Profintern congress, Lozovsky reaffirmed this line, stating that the problem of strike strategy had to be resolved in a "revolutionary, communist" manner, although he warned against anarcho-syndicalist militancy.⁶³ In Czechoslovakia, communists endeavoured, at least on paper, to carry out this line. During the metal-workers' strike in May, 1922 and the miners' strike of autumn 1923,

the KSC and MVS issued appeals calling for the extension of the disputes and in the latter case for a general strike throughout the republic.⁶⁴ The MVS was founded on the principle of union solidarity, of one union helping another, but it was recognised that such support could not always be given.⁶⁵ Hence, it often proved difficult to involve even other communist workers. This was true of the strike of miners, metal and chemical workers in the Ostrava region in the spring of 1925. The Ostrava strike was also significant in that it revealed the limitations of the united front tactic.

The origins of the conflict can be traced to early February, 1925, when the Red Unions decided to hold a referendum of miners to determine whether they were prepared to fight for higher wages.⁶⁶ According to communist sources, between 95-99 percent of the workers supported the demand for a 30 percent wage increase in the metal and chemical industries and 20 percent for miners.⁶⁷ In March, MVS sections issued several appeals for a united front with non-communist organisations.⁶⁸ Simultaneously, attacks were published on the Social Democratic union leaderships: "The fight against the reformist leaders must be fought to the end this time."⁶⁹ The dichotomy of this approach was plain. Although the professed aim was to build up a "real united front from below and above of workers and union leaders of all trade union organisations," the language used was sure to alienate non-communist workers and officials.⁷⁰ Moreover, the "leftist radicalism and sectarianism" of the local MVS and KSC leaders, which resulted in a demand to break collective agreements and make them invalid for all workers, frightened the workers who saw in this a threat to their basic living conditions.⁷¹ Consequently OSČ and Christian Social unions refused to participate in a joint meeting on 6 March, leaving the Red Unions largely isolated.⁷²

Despite the lack of unity, the strike was not called off and began on 30 March. Reportedly 80 percent of local pitmen from forty-three out of fifty mines answered the call and a total of 50,000 workers struck.⁷³ One third of chemical workers were behind the communists, but support among metalworkers was disappointingly low.⁷⁴ The important Vítkovice ironworks, a "solid bastion" of the Social Democrats, continued normal production, and according to *Právo lidu* hardly 15 percent of metal and chemical workers came out.⁷⁵ These numbers gradually decreased in the following days and the strike had to be called off on 6 April. The

blame for this was laid at the Social Democrats' door. On 11 March, the regional committee of the OSČ Union of Miners had apparently agreed with the demands and intimated that its members would carry out "their socialist and workers' duty."⁷⁶ By the end of the month, union officials had completed a *volte face*, describing the strike as "unpremeditated" and one which offered "no guarantee of success."⁷⁷

The inquest on the strike afforded differing interpretations. For the MVS, Hájek enthusiastically declared that it marked the "first great attempt to create a united front from below . . . against the reformist leaders."⁷⁸ The strike only failed because of the "direct strike-breaking" activities of the Social Democratic unions.⁷⁹ The fact that the strike remained isolated, largely because the great hopes placed on the Kladno miners failed to materialise, was also blamed on the reformist strike-breaking tactics. Kladno could not intervene since even in Ostrava the strike was not total.⁸⁰ In contrast to this interpretation, the third KSČ congress saw the lack of communist fraction work in Social Democratic organisations as the main cause of the defeat. Although 95 percent of the workers voted for united action, insufficient pressure had been exerted on the reformist leaders. Weak fraction work enabled OSČ officials to reject the struggle and break the united front. Communists thus overestimated the united front from above and neglected the practical implementation of work from below. Furthermore, the refusal of the Kladno miners to act in solidarity was emphatically condemned.⁸¹

The affair surrounding the Kladno miners is worth some discussion. During the strike two Kladno envoys, Konopa and Koubek, visited Ostrava, but were unimpressed and consequently unwilling to make sacrifices for a lost cause. A stormy meeting of regional MVS shop-stewards on 4 April 1925 voted by 35 to 15 not to join the strike, despite pressure from the KSČ representatives, Stern and Doležal.⁸² If Social Democratic sources are to be believed, Macák, one of the leaders of the Kladno miners, protested against the strike to the KSČ executive, and a conference of Kladno delegates on 28 and 29 March refused to participate unless Ostrava "flared up."⁸³ This "rebellion" was a significant demonstration of the fact that Red Unionists were prepared to resist party pressure and act independently.

The Social Democratic interpretation of the dispute accused the Communist Party of gross interference. The strike was undertaken in order

to "disguise internal antagonisms within the Communist Party . . .," a reference to the Bubník affair. The Ostrava workers had thus become "a victim of Bolshevik-Communist putschism."⁸⁴ The OSČ miners' report of 1927 stated that the Ostrava communists were "commanded by the Prague 'Politburo,'" and that "... it was obvious the strike was called by the Communist Party for partisan-demagogic reasons. . . ." Social Democratic workers were prevented from working by "communist terror."⁸⁵ Trlík, the ex-secretary of the Red Unions in Ostrava, went even further, asserting that the strike was called not to improve workers' living conditions, but on the "direct *diktat* of Moscow." The Profintern had donated 400,000 crowns to the MVS in aid for the miners, which, Trlík claimed rather unbelievably, had been appropriated by Neurath for his personal use. *Rudé právo* denied this vehemently.⁸⁶

Whatever the real cause of the strike, it must be regarded as a failure. The sought-after wage increases were not secured, workers' blood was spilt in Orlov where three people were shot dead on 4 April, and 2,398 workers and 42 members of local factory councils were sacked for their involvement in the strike.⁸⁷ Moreover, the rift between the MVS and the other unions widened. The hostility engendered by the strike made the possibility of a future united front, either from above or below, more remote. The dispute also proved that when isolated the Red Unions were unable to lead the mass of workers independently. They were simply too weak, numerically, financially and ideologically.⁸⁸ Perhaps the most important lesson of the Ostrava strike was the realisation on the part of the MVS leadership that strikes could not be called willy-nilly regardless of local conditions. As the Chemical section report of 1929 declared, strikes were not an end in themselves. They had to respond to the "power positions" of the organisations within the factory. "It is not possible to play with strikes."⁸⁹

Caution was also demanded by Nádvorník in his speech on strike strategy to the second MVS congress. He said that strike action had to be carefully planned and prepared, and a general strike was only possible when absolutely necessary. The congress effectively shelved any embarrassing decision on this subject by delegating the MVS central board to devise detailed instructions, which, as far as one can tell, were never published.⁹⁰ The circumspection and caution displayed by the MVS leadership were implicitly criticised by several figures. In September

1925, Hájek discussed the need for a "revolutionary strike strategy," which he defined somewhat vaguely as the formation of a united front in the factories to force the reformists into joint struggles.⁹¹ At the second MVS congress Novák, a delegate from Pardubice, also mentioned the necessity of propagating a revolutionary strike strategy, but gave no details of what this should look like.⁹² The fourth KSČ congress was only slightly more specific. Zápotocký rejected the reformist notion of concluding compromise agreements with employers, complaining that some revolutionary union secretaries were guilty of this "out of sheer opportunism and convenience." In several instances not the slightest effort had been made to achieve the workers' demands. What was required were prepared struggles and mass action involving all union members. These actions should take on a political character.⁹³

Such platitudes offered little concrete information on what the new strategy should actually entail or how "all union members" were to be involved in mass actions. After the congress, Hájek endeavoured to fill this gap by demanding that in future unofficial strikes should be made official as soon as possible, the aim being to politicise strikes and unite the mass of workers for the fight against capitalism.⁹⁴ As it became clear that the new strategy was shifting towards a more belligerent, independent approach to strikes, so it became equally clear that the MVS leadership was unable and unwilling to adapt to the new line demanded by Moscow and the KSČ left.

The KSČ Trade Union Department

Although the controversies surrounding the organisational structure of the MVS and the united front tactic were important indicators of the rivalry and discord between the party and the unions, it was the thorny issue of party supervision or "interference" in union affairs which struck at the heart of KSČ-MVS relations.

The question of the relationship between the Communist Party and the revolutionary unions was very delicate. According to Bohumír Šmeral, speaking on this topic at the second MVS congress, the relationship between the KSČ and its affiliated Red Unions was not to be perceived as the dominance of the former over the latter. He emphasised that "the MVS . . . is not a Communist Party organisation . . .," and acknowledged

that "... the party leadership should never entertain the idea of applying its influence by forceful methods, commands and narrow-minded interference." He even went so far as to say that,

it would be incorrect to believe that the party leadership looks upon the MVS and the Red Union organisations as dependent appendages of the party, merely as its instrument without the right of an independent life and decision-making.

Difficulties arose, however, when Šmeral immediately tempered this idea of union autonomy with the demand that trade union organisations respect and not obstruct party fractional work and propaganda. Party principles, decrees and discipline were binding on both party members and communist trade union functionaries. In short, communists "... naturally submit to strict communist discipline" and do not cease to do so when acting as members or officials of a trade union. A communist's "... entire behavior in the union must correspond to the principles and decisions of the Communist Party."⁹⁵ Clearly, this definition left considerable room for interpretation, and indeed deviation, since the dividing line between "independent decision-making" and "communist discipline" was never correctly defined.

The union's position was outlined in the MVS report of 1926. Having stated that close mutual links and support between the party and unions were vital and that political and economic actions could not be separated, the report continued by saying,

this of course does not mean that the Red Unions can be seen as exclusively political. . . . Revolutionary trade unionists understand the phrase 'the political nature (*političnost*) of union organisations' to signify the necessity of the closest cooperation of the unions with the revolutionary political party. . . . However, should these words. . . be understood as meaning the formal membership (*přislušnost*) of these organisations in the political party, then revolutionary trade unionists oppose this political nature of union organisations.

In defence of their position the MVS leaders used the well-tryed method of citing higher authorities, namely the Comintern, Lozovsky and Mikhail

Tomsky, who at the fourteenth congress of the Russian Communist Party in December 1925 spoke against the "petty interference of party organs in the daily work of trade union organisations" and the party's "unnecessary command methods." Unfortunately for the MVS leadership, Tomsky's ideas were to be given short shrift in the not-too-distant future. In 1926 though, the report was able to conclude that the "mechanical pressure" exercised by the party on the unions was uncalled-for and that the latter should not be considered a "spiritless body" subject to external control. On the contrary, the party should see them as real partners and even as advisers. Should this become the case, "... it would be very easy for communists in the unions to carry out the party line..."⁹⁶ One can readily recognise here an implicit criticism of the stance adopted by those in the KSČ who wished to limit the union's field of independent action.

The body responsible for party work in the Red Unions was the trade union department of the Executive Committee of the KSČ. In March 1926 the Orgburo of the ECCI issued directives on the structure and function of trade union departments. Their principal tasks were to explain and oversee the implementation of party congress decisions and decrees of the Central Committee pertaining to the trade union movement; to work out instructions on all aspects of the economic and industrial life of the country, and of the situation in the trade unions and working class as a whole; to guide and supervise the activity of party fractions in the national executive committees of the unions; and to ensure the implementation of a uniform party line in the unions. In addition, the department was to organise regular district and local union conferences and send Central Committee "instructors" to examine the work of fractions. The department should consist of a leader, who was to be a member of the Central Committee, his deputy and the requisite number of responsible workers.⁹⁷ These directives were published in Czechoslovakia in the *Rudé právo* column *Organizátor*, the author emphasising that the department was to manage the work of communists according to the orders of the party centre.⁹⁸

The KSČ trade union department (*odborové oddělení*) was headed from the first party congress by Rudolf Kohn, up till then hardly known in the Czechoslovak labour movement. He was a Jew of German-Czech origin born in 1885. According to a memorandum produced for the

third party congress, the department was subordinate to the Executive Committee of the KSČ and "cooperated closely" with a "trade union commission," composed of Josef Hais, Hruška, Harus, Kolský, Stern and later Arno Hais.⁹⁹ In January, 1926 Jaroslav Metzl became Kohn's deputy.¹⁰⁰ The memorandum asserted that,

The trade union department actively interfered in all trade union questions...and in all economic struggles. In important cases it submitted proposals to the political secretariat or political department of the party.

Furthermore, "in all matters concerning the internal life of the MVS the trade union department always enforced party standpoints..."¹⁰¹ Kohn attended MVS board meetings as a representative of the KSČ and was empowered to "intervene directly" in questions concerning the Red trade union movement. The department tried to justify this by saying that Hais could do exactly the same in the Executive Committee of the KSČ, although in reality there was no comparison. In order to enforce party rulings the department:

...organised the activities of party members before congresses of revolutionary unions so that they should conform to the principles of the communist movement and the decrees of its highest institutions.

Similar aims were pursued before congresses of reformist organisations ensuring that left-wing oppositions, where they existed, were as strong and prepared as possible. Kohn personally arranged fraction conferences in many regions to elucidate the goals of communists in the unions. Finally, the department strove, "in the complicated conditions of Czechoslovakia," to carry out Comintern directives on trade union unity.¹⁰²

Although the party leadership intervened widely in union affairs through its trade union department, it did not always do so successfully. Consecutive party congresses and conferences stressed repeatedly the need for party discipline among communist trade unionists, inferring that such discipline was lacking. The first congress in February 1923 instructed communists to work in accordance with party directives

and discipline. The Executive Committee, represented by its department, was described as the highest organ in trade union work.¹⁰³ Twenty months later the second congress admonished members not to act independently or "deviate from party decrees on trade union unity."¹⁰⁴ The third congress was particularly concerned that communists should carry out party instructions on fraction work in the unions, while the problem of KSČ-MVS relations came to something of a head at the fourth congress.¹⁰⁵ Zápotocký more than hinted at the barely-concealed antagonisms, saying that communists in the unions and party should not be seen as two "enemy camps" working against each other. At times there existed a "permanent mutual battle" between functionaries of the Red Unions and the KSČ. The young leftist, Rudolf Slánský, delivered the most telling blow against the Red Unionists. He declared bluntly that the Bolshevisation process within the unions had yet to be carried out. It was resisted not so much by the mass of members as by a number of communists and union officials. To combat this he proposed that "... active functionaries from the factory cells, Bolsheviks, should be sent into the unions to teach them how to work properly." Immediately prior to Slánský's remarks, Hais had warned that,

direct [party] interference and tutelage over the unions is always incorrect, and it is necessary to reject it as decisively as possible.

One can see here a forewarning of the future struggle between the Bolsheviks and the MVS leaders. The congress trade union resolution bypassed any direct reference to the problem of party-union relations, but did state that "harmful, opportunist tendencies" had to be eliminated.¹⁰⁶

An earlier indication of the party's increasing efforts to control union affairs was the directive issued in mid-January 1927, which allowed for Central Committee arbitration in any controversy regarding the Red Unions.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, even this apparently failed to galvanise the MVS into action. Zápotocký complained in May that the decisions of the party congress and the directive from January had still to be implemented.¹⁰⁸ The resistance of the MVS leaders was resolute. From this brief resumé of relations between the KSČ and MVS at party congresses we can detect a progressive hardening of attitude on both sides, and

sense that throughout the 1920s the party never managed to exert its will on the Red Union leadership.

The first sign of friction, albeit of relatively minor significance, was revealed at the first KSČ congress and concerned Kohn's attitude to Red Union delegates. Hais noted that Kohn's theses on trade union work, as ratified by the congress, had not been made known in advance to MVS representatives and therefore he demanded a meeting to discuss them.¹⁰⁹ As Kohn had just become head of the trade union department, it was not a good beginning to his tenure and did not bode well for future relations.

Although in the years 1923-1924 the pages of the communist press only rarely dwelt on behind-the-scenes developments, one highly relevant exception was the terse announcement published in *Dělník* after the second party congress in November 1924. This statement read that in response to queries from members on how the congress resolution should be understood, the MVS and independent unions had decided that the resolution was:

... valid only for members of the Communist Party. The MVS and independent unions... as independent and statutory organisations are not subject to the decrees of any political party, but only to the resolutions of their own trade union congresses.¹¹⁰

This bold pronouncement was a crystal clear reminder that the MVS leadership was not prepared to be dominated by party decisions, that it intended to pursue an independent line, and that the Red Unions were to be regarded as autonomous, executive bodies in their own right. According to the third KSČ congress, the announcement was made on Tetenka's initiative, despite the fact that the "assault" had been rejected by the Central Committee.¹¹¹ This interpretation seems one-sided, since Tetenka alone could hardly have forced the MVS leadership to publish such a controversial statement in its central organ.

It was not an isolated event either. The assertion of union autonomy aroused widespread condemnation in early 1925. In February, a party observer wrote that the Red Unions did not submit to the united leadership of the KSČ.¹¹² At an Orgburo conference in March, Pyatnitsky, the Comintern expert on party organisation, foresaw the danger that

the MVS might "become too independent and separate from the party, and then fight against the party." Czech "opportunists" were accused of having created a "divided conscience" between trade union and party loyalty.¹¹³ At the fifth enlarged ECCI plenum, Harus commented that independence of the Red Unions meant in practice "extrication from Moscow." He then attacked Hais personally:

Comrade Hais is playing a dual role; on the one hand as a member of the Politburo, and on the other as secretary of the Red Unions. An end must also be put to that. The Communist Party must have the decisive influence in these questions.¹¹⁴

These sentiments found weighty support from Stalin. At the Czechoslovak Commission of the ECCI plenum in April 1925 he called the demand for "complete independence of the trade unions from the party" a dangerous rightist deviation.¹¹⁵ Indeed, the plenum strongly opposed the theory, and particularly the practice, of trade union independence.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, the leftist Stern even advocated that those who demanded union autonomy should be expelled from the party.¹¹⁷

The situation was clearly acute and remained so throughout 1925. At the third party congress in September, the so-called Kladno Memorandum was severely criticised:

in the past year attempts have been made by certain MVS functionaries to extricate themselves from party influence. These attempts are of a liquidationist character and must be harshly stamped out. If some comrades demand greater independence for the trade union movement... as happened in the Kladno Memorandum, and if some secretaries of the independent unions even call for neutrality towards all worker parties, then this resistance on the part of some trade unionists to communist policy also represents a policy, but an anti-communist one.¹¹⁸

Unfortunately, the text of the Memorandum was not made public, even in the local Kladno journal *Svoboda*, but obviously it aroused the wrath of the party. Judging from the fact that it apparently called for greater union autonomy and bearing in mind that the Kladno communist miners

had refused to act in solidarity with their striking comrades in Ostrava in April 1925, one may conclude that the important Kladno region was a centre of MVS opposition to party supervision. It seems that local union leaders did not subserviently follow party orders when their members' interests were at stake. Indeed, according to Social Democratic sources, the whole situation in Kladno in early 1925 was chaotic. *Právo lidu* claimed that the Communist Party and unions were "disintegrating," and that Zápotocký and Macák were considered unreliable.¹¹⁹ Other important areas, namely Brno, Prague, Hradec Králové and Nymburk, sympathised with the position adopted in the Memorandum, being as they were strongholds of the expelled rightists, Bubník and Rouček.¹²⁰ It is also reasonable to suggest that it found backing in the highest organs of the MVS, testifying to the extent of union opposition to party control.¹²¹

The Social Democrats made the most of the crisis in the KSČ in early 1925, arguing that after the expulsion of the Bubník faction "the right of free thought in the Communist Party has been definitively suspended." *Právo lidu* detected three trends in the Red trade union movement. The most militant was Kohn's, which sought to subject the unions completely to the party. The centre line was represented by Hais and the majority of MVS secretaries and employees, who maintained a certain degree of independence in order to mask their resistance to Profintern decrees. The third trend was that of the independent Red Unionists, who prevented a merger with the MVS and were "in revolt" against both the Profintern and the union. In this critical situation the Red Unions had "no influence" and the KSČ and MVS leaders were "in a state of nervous tension."¹²²

At this point it is worth concentrating on the disorganisation within the KSČ since it had a direct bearing on the party's reaction to the Red Unions. Šmeral, addressing the fifth enlarged ECCI plenum, bemoaned the interference of the Comintern representative, Manuilsky, at the second party congress in November 1924. He had created "an atmosphere of panic... a fear in a large section of the party of being expelled." The new left-wing Central Committee had introduced "a regular espionage system." Šmeral concluded that "the comrades who form the leadership today are unable to lead the party even with the support of the executive" (i.e. ECCI).¹²³ Neurath insisted that Manuilsky had demanded

that the new Executive Committee should consist of leftists against the wishes of the election committee. The Comintern representatives assured the Czechs that if this was ignored, an extraordinary congress would be convened within three months on the command of the Comintern.¹²⁴ For Šmeral the crux of the issue was the extent to which "*the executive . . . can interfere in the internal party affairs of the parties.*"¹²⁵ In his view Manuilsky had overstepped the mark of legitimate interference.

At the same meeting in Moscow, the Czech delegate Tondl summarised internal party discord thus:

attempts were made to foist personal points of view upon others and hence unwholesomeness arose in the Party. These conflicts give rise to personal hatefulness [which is] bound to have a bad effect on our activities.¹²⁶

Such "unwholesomeness" was still present in the party over two years later in the opinion of the right-wing "liquidator," K. Vaněk. He was accused by *Rudé právo* of having disseminated leaflets stating that the situation in the party centre was getting worse from day to day.

Mutual vilification, back-biting and personal jealousies and affairs still remain the principal and rich content of the otherwise poor activity of the Politburo.¹²⁷

In this atmosphere of fear, suspicion and divisiveness, one can more readily comprehend the inertia and powerlessness of the Executive Committee to exert its will on the Red Unions. As Stern commented in January 1926, the party took the "line of least resistance" in the trade union question, leaving the MVS to its own devices.¹²⁸ According to the ultra-leftist, Reiman, Kohn did everything in his power to change MVS policy, but did not have the backing of the KSČ leadership.¹²⁹

One of the main areas in which Kohn's trade union department tried with some success to alter MVS policy was the question of trade union unity, and more specifically, the idea of the dissolution of the Red Unions. The fifth Comintern and third Profintern congresses had raised the possibility of unity being achieved at an all-trade union unification congress, which necessarily implied the dissolution of the MVS.¹³⁰ Naturally,

the prospect aroused great concern among the MVS leadership. Hais speaking at the Karlín conference in December 1924 is alleged to have stated that the non-communist members of the Red Unions, of whom there were a majority, feared the campaign for unification, which was "under the patronage of the KSČ," would result not in unity, but in the break-up of existing trade unions. He affirmed that the introduction of politics into union organisations would split the movement still further, a statement which revealed Hais's fundamental wariness of KSČ motives and aims.¹³¹

The basic contradiction was that the MVS leaders insisted on strengthening the Red Unions, not dissolving them. For them, only strong revolutionary unions could force the Social Democrats into unification, not general dissolution followed by a merger congress, as Lozovsky had proposed at the fifth Comintern congress. In short, the MVS leaders were opposed to the decisions of the International congresses of July 1924, and to those comrades in the KSČ who took these decisions too literally.

The situation altered somewhat in March and April 1925. Under pressure from Šmeral and Zápotocký, the ECCI seems to have revised the previous line, at least to a certain degree. Zápotocký, addressing the special Czechoslovak Commission, characterised the credo of the majority of the KSČ Politburo as "the weaker our Red Unions, the sooner unification with the Amsterdam unions will occur." He rejected this stance, saying that the party should defend what it had gained so that the Red Unions could become a counterweight to Amsterdam. Šmeral expounded similar ideas, confirming that the "trade union comrades" forcefully justified the existence and development of the Red Unions against those who felt that "the fewer members the Red trade unions have, the better for unity."¹³² Thus, the notion that the MVS was expendable in the struggle for unity was a powerful one and enjoyed the support of many KSČ leaders at this time.

Despite this fact the ECCI backed Zápotocký and Šmeral on this question, resolving that the Red Unions should be strengthened as part of the campaign for unity.¹³³ Even so the issue of the dissolution of the MVS was not buried. At the end of April 1925, the "MVS manifesto to the working class of Czechoslovakia" was published, calling for an all-trade union unity congress to be attended by all existing trade union

organisations. All nationalities, political persuasions and branches of industry were to be merged into united, multinational, industrial unions administered by a single, unified central body. The relevant passage of the manifesto read:

the MVS announces its willingness to dissolve the MVS in order that its industrial sections can merge with similar organisations¹³⁴

The same tactics had been employed in the metalworker talks two months earlier, and this new appeal was likewise rejected or ignored by other trade union centres.¹³⁵ This made the practical question of MVS dissolution academic.

Nonetheless, Kohn reiterated the call at the third party congress, promising that,

. . . we shall liquidate the MVS and Red Unions when . . . they [i.e. the reformists] also liquidate and create a united industrial trade union centre.

The word "we" here is crucial. In my interpretation, Kohn, speaking in the name of the trade union department, was referring to the party, not the Red Unions. It was the KSČ, not the MVS, that insisted on the manifesto and the possibility of dissolving the Red union movement. This was done directly against the wishes of the Hais leadership. At the same gathering, Hais himself argued that the unification of the working class did not mean that MVS sections could be "thrown away" (*vystřkovat*), since "a weakening of the Communist Party" would be the result.¹³⁶ Arno Hais had earlier quoted Lozovsky in defence of this position. He had written that "the struggle for unity does not mean self-liquidation."¹³⁷ Hájek reinforced this argument with exactly the same words at the first MVS miners' congress in January 1926, stating that "the struggle for unity does not signify . . . the liquidation of the Red Unions."¹³⁸

It seems most likely in this case that the party was able to impress its will on the Red Unions because the "dissolution" campaign was purely a propaganda exercise, which communists knew in advance would be ignored by the OSČ, ČOD and German Social Democratic union leaderships. No real practical danger existed to the MVS and therefore it could

reluctantly agree to follow the Profintern and KSČ propaganda line. Nevertheless, the party and the trade union department acted against the wishes and interest of the MVS leadership.

The question remains as to why the KSČ was unable or unwilling to compel the Red Unions to carry out the directives emanating from Moscow. We have already touched on this problem above. The Politburo throughout the mid-1920s was bitterly divided between left, right and centre, and unable to agree on a coherent and permanent trade union policy outside of rehashing Comintern and Profintern slogans and propaganda. In this atmosphere, the MVS leaders were provided with room to pursue independent or semi-independent policies while paying lip service to the official line.¹³⁹ The party, furthermore, did not devote sufficient attention to the trade union issue, tending to neglect the question of fraction work, unification and organisational structure. The day-to-day management of the Red Unions was left very firmly in the hands of the Hais leadership. Only leftists like Kohn, Stern, Harus and Hruška consistently expounded the ideas of Bolshevisation, the rest of the party leadership being largely apathetic towards union work. In this situation the MVS could resist those demands which it perceived to be harmful. A combination of party weakness, apathy and inertia made it possible for the MVS to ignore in practice many orders from the KSČ and Profintern. Given this, we may conclude that in both the KSČ and the MVS the traditional Social Democratic view of formal union independence from political parties was still strong among leaders and members alike. The clash between the "Social Democratic remnants" and the new left, which developed gradually in the years 1925-1927, intensified rapidly in 1928 as the theory of "class against class" became official Comintern policy. From this time on MVS resistance to party dominance became even sharper, culminating in the split of March 1929.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE SCHISM IN THE MVS

From the very beginning of the existence of the MVS arguments were common between the leaderships of the MVS and KSČ on tactical and organisational questions¹

These arguments took on an even more serious and threatening tone in the course of 1928 and early 1929. The shift to the left in Comintern and Profintern tactics, epitomised by the theory of "class against class," encouraged the new left in Czechoslovakia to step up its campaign against both the party and union leaderships. The left steadily undermined the power positions of the MVS leaders, forcing them to take drastic defensive measures, first in late 1928, and again, irrevocably, in March, 1929. The result was a schism in the MVS and the formation of a new, pro-Moscow union centre closely allied to the Gottwald party leadership.

The Theoretical Foundations of the Third Period

Before examining the dramatic events in Czechoslovakia, it is essential to analyse in some detail the theoretical and ideological foundations of the Third Period. According to Moscow it was an era of "... the most severe intensification of the general capitalist crisis" The sixth Comintern congress in July and August, 1928 declared that for the capitalist world it was "a period of rapid technical development," one in which

a trend towards "state capitalism" could be observed. Owing to the growing contradictions in the world economy and the contraction of markets, "a fresh era of imperialist wars" would arise "inevitably," including a war against the U.S.S.R. In this atmosphere of tension,

the close bonds between the reformist trade union and party leaders, the employers' organisations, and the bourgeois State . . . (and) the theory and practice of 'industrial democracy' and industrial peace . . .

were all "... means to prevent the unfolding of the class struggle" In domestic policy, Social Democracy was directly supporting the capitalist régime. It had:

. . . completely abandoned Marxism. Having traversed the stage of revisionism, it has reached that of bourgeois liberal social reform and overt social imperialism.

Despite this "base betrayal" by the reformists, and indeed partly because of it, "... the resistance of the workers is growing in many ways." The Comintern detected a shift to the left among the European working class. It was the duty of communists to intensify the fight against the "bourgeois labour parties" by means of the united front from below, and to "... guide the masses to a revolutionary position" ² In effect, this meant the independent leadership of strikes, regardless of the stance taken by the reformists, leading ultimately to a struggle for political power.

It is most interesting to note that the idea of Social Democracy as the "third arm" of the bourgeoisie was not entirely novel. In July, 1924, the fifth Comintern congress had described Social Democratic leaders thus:

In its top ranks the Amsterdam International is a bulwark of international imperialism, an organisation expressing particularly blatantly the conservatism, backwardness, national narrow-mindedness, bourgeois-imperialist sentiments of the workers most corrupted by the bourgeoisie.

The reformists indulged in "fascist strike-breaking," and Social Democracy in Europe had already become:

...in a certain sense, the 'third' bourgeois party...from being the right wing of the labour movement it is becoming one wing of the bourgeoisie, in places even a wing of fascism.... So far as their leading strata are concerned, fascism and social-democracy are the right and left hands of modern capitalism....³

This line was duly propagated in Czechoslovakia, albeit in a modified form. The leftist Bubeníček described Social Democrats as "agents of the bourgeoisie," while an article in *Dělník* entitled *They remain old enemies of the working class* claimed that the OSČ leaders also supported the bourgeoisie.⁴ Hence, the Third Period of 1928-1933 had a theoretical precedent from 1924. The Comintern did not then simply introduce a radical break with the past, but canonised those existing, leftist concepts which suited the drive against the Right in the Soviet Union.

The initial indication of a turn to the left in 1928 came in the field of strike strategy. In February, the ninth ECCI plenum demanded that communists base their tactics on a "resolute and relentless struggle against so-called 'industrial peace'....," a notion actively supported by reformist trade union leaders. "It is therefore the job of communists to... seize strike leadership from the reformists....," which meant organising strikes "against the will of the trade union bureaucracy." This did not signify that communists could "play with strikes," especially the slogan of the general strike, but that struggles should be prepared and planned in advance. In countries where the union movement was split, communists were ordered to recruit new members, change the unions into industrial unions and create a united front from below with reformist and non-organised workers.⁵

In an article written in January, but published in March, Lozovsky summarised the new line on strike strategy. He identified a rising wave in all countries and launched a bitter attack on reformist tactics. Recently the reformist unions and employer organisations had ceased being:

...two warring parties, but are one party which reaches agreement...in order to prevent the discontent of the masses from breaking out....

This represented "...a growing alliance between the Amsterdam organisations and the bourgeois State...", turning unions into strike-breaking organs. Indeed, strike-breaking had "become the most important principle of the Amsterdam International and its sections."⁶

The Leftist Press Campaign

In Czechoslovakia, the KSČ was quick to latch onto the new tactics, at least verbally. As early as January, *Rudé právo* had asserted that the united front was possible "even over the heads of the reformist leaders," and a few days later the same paper discovered "a certain passivity in social struggles" on the part of the MVS.⁷ In the article mentioned above, Lozovsky had reprimanded Czech trade unionists for their rejection of strike action simply because of insufficient financial resources. A "ruthless struggle" had to be waged against this "reformist tendency."⁸ An editorial in *The Communist International* elaborated on this theme. Repeating Lozovsky's arguments, the author claimed that communists were afraid to strike. The MVS leaders asked how the workers could strike if they lacked sufficient funds, to which the Comintern asked in reply, how would the workers make a revolution? The MVS view revealed that,

*...the many years of reformist influence are showing their effect.... Victory can be obtained not with financial resources, but with revolutionary strike strategy....*⁹

Evidently, the situation within the MVS was intolerable for the increasingly vociferous new left. In an attempt to discredit the Red Unions publicly, the leftists initiated a "discussion" on the trade union question in preparation for the forthcoming Profintern congress. The campaign, carried out on the pages of *Rudé právo*, was later condemned by the Hais group as "uncomradely agitation," labelling the MVS leaders "opportunists."¹⁰ Klement Gottwald spearheaded the debate with a long

article published on 12 February. Beginning with the words "...experience has confirmed the absolute correctness of the Comintern and party line on the trade union question," he went on to outline the three main principles of union activity. These were the systematic work of communists in reformist unions with the aim of revolutionising and capturing them; the creation of left-wing strongholds in reformist organisations linked to the Red trade union movement; and the liquidation of trade union "indifferentism" (i.e. non-unionisation of workers), leading ultimately to a struggle for the unification of trade unions on an anti-bourgeois, class basis. "Up till now there have been many shortcomings in our practical trade union work." Many MVS activists did not know what Bolshevisation tactics meant and therefore it was necessary to popularise Leninist directives. Other weaknesses included a "lack of concrete tactics" in wage and economic struggles, insufficient knowledge of the new methods of the reformists and employers, neglect of fraction work in both Social Democratic and Red Unions, a paucity of detailed explanation of the aims of the union movement, inadequate contact between the MVS central apparatus and the mass of workers, and the rapid fluctuation in MVS membership. Gottwald also called for greater "self-action" and freedom of movement for MVS sections, more systematic work among the unemployed, women and young workers, all of whom were victims of capitalist rationalisation, and, most importantly, the "activation" of the party apparatus in trade union work.¹¹

The *Rudé právo* campaign lasted well into April, 1928, becoming a forum for leftist attacks on the MVS on a whole range of issues. Egon Maier argued that the organisational changes ratified at the second MVS congress had not fundamentally rectified the failings of the union's structure, which had prevented a merger with the independent unions.¹² A female unionist from Ústí nad Labem lamented that "...the MVS has often not played a leading role in economic struggles...but has carried out semi-reformist tactics..."¹³ Josef Jonáš, a prominent leftist in the Agricultural workers' section, affirmed that the Red Union leaders had resisted the formation of fractions in sections and in the MVS central apparatus.¹⁴ Biehal bemoaned the Social Democratic character of the MVS and its attempts aimed at the "de-politicisation of trade unions."¹⁵ Josef Guttman, a leading representative of the new left in the KSČ, asked whether communists in the Red Unions really implemented

party policy. The answer, according to him, was unanimous: "*They do not implement it.*" MVS leaders submitted to party decisions, but did not honestly fulfill them.¹⁶

Two or three contributors emphasised the party's instrumental role in any solution to the trade union problem. Haniš considered the matter to be above all one for the entire party to resolve, not merely the Red Unions.¹⁷ Another observer went much further, insinuating that the party was to blame for not recognising the "mistakes" in the work of the MVS. He asked:

did the party leaders know nothing about the incorrect interpretation of fraction work in the MVS centre, about the reformist viewpoint on the question of unification and about the incorrect MVS idea of gaining members from reformist unions?¹⁸

The linking of the trade union issue with criticisms of the KSČ was pivotal to the leftists' plan of action. They saw a joint rightist danger within the KSČ and MVS leaderships, equating the Jílek party régime with Hais's in the Red Unions.

The position of the MVS central administration on these questions changed considerably in the weeks preceding the *Rudé právo* debate. On 21 January, *Dělník* declared that although the methods of the struggle for unity needed to be altered, the slogan of "unity from below" was not enough in itself. More details were required on how to realise the united front from below, on what organisational forms it should take, and, significantly, the specific national conditions of every country had to be examined. Tactics good for Germany or France may not be relevant for Czechoslovakia.¹⁹ This most interesting assertion of specific national characteristics harked back to Hais's ideas at the second Profintern congress in November, 1922.²⁰

Within the space of a week a session of MVS section boards reconsidered the concept of unity and accepted the united front from below should work from above prove unsuccessful.²¹ Exactly two weeks later, however, an enlarged MVS board meeting reversed the previous decision, perhaps under direct pressure from the left, but more likely with the intention of diverting future criticism, stating openly that "it is necessary to build a united front above all from below," since work "from above"

had failed. "Some functionaries" had submitted to the reformist "majority" and committed the mistake of drawing discontented workers from Social Democratic unions into the MVS. An end had to be put to this manoeuvre and Leninist principles had to be used to win the support of left-wing workers in reformist organisations. The passivity of the membership also had to be eliminated by the increased activity and consciousness of union officials. Finally, more young workers should be attracted to the Red Unions.²² It is more than possible that in early 1928 the MVS leadership did not fully appreciate the threat posed to it by the new left and ratified this resolution as a way of pacifying the Bolsheviks. Judging from later developments it did not represent a sincere reversal of policy.

Rudé právo, commenting on the board meeting, charged that the decisions of the third Profintern congress had only been partially implemented and demanded an end to the fluctuation of MVS membership by enlisting non-unionised workers.²³ *Rudý odborář* completed the self-rectification drive with a lengthy article entitled *How can we overcome the present stagnation?* The report started by justifying the validity of the united union form of organisation, which was not seen as the cause of the stagnation. The real reasons lay in the methods and content of past work. Once again "some functionaries" were accused of being too inflexible in their approach to the united front tactic, renouncing criticism of the reformists and the mobilisation of the masses "in the interests of the united front." Furthermore, some comrades shirked work in Social Democratic unions, damaging the struggle for influence over the mass of workers. Radical new solutions to these problems were proposed. MVS posts should be systematically filled with:

fresh forces from the ranks of the workers, from new MVS members, and obviously also from the ranks of the broad mass of members

This was to include politically indifferent workers, the aim being to introduce a "real democratic centralist system," headed by a collective leadership.²⁴ Such changes, later to be demanded by the fourth Profintern congress, would have drastically altered the MVS organisational structure and undermined the leading positions of the Hais group. They were also an indication of the influence already enjoyed by the new left

both inside and outside the Red Unions. It was clear that the MVS leaders were confronted by a two-pronged attack: from discontented ultra-leftists within the Red Unions and their benefactors in the KSČ.

If the aim of the MVS had been to forestall this leftist attack, it was unsuccessful. Increasingly MVS past tactics and failures came in for scathing criticism, nowhere more so than in the party's theoretical journal, *Komunistická revue*, which had become a mouthpiece of the ultra-left. In the March, 1928 edition Rudolf Slánský published a vitriolic article condemning Red Union functionaries for pursuing a non-Leninist ideology. "*Their ideology is the ideology of trade union independence.*" These officials thought that fractions were organs of the party directed against them and Slánský assured them that they were indeed directed against those trade unionists who had not liberated themselves from reformist traditions and who divorced themselves from the party and its strict revolutionary discipline. "Young Bolshevik elements" should be coopted into the MVS apparatus to revolutionise fraction work and strike strategy.²⁵

In contrast to Slánský, Zápotocký offered a slightly more objective analysis of the general situation in the Czech labour movement, even if his solutions were basically leftist. He identified four main reasons for the weaknesses in MVS work: the influence of old reformist education and practices; a lack of faith and an unwillingness among workers to adopt the new methods and tactics; the mechanical repetition of formulas and theses without detailed daily organisational activity; and a universal lack of theoretical and practical education among broad strata of trade union workers.²⁶ The second and fourth points touched on the heart of the matter, namely the dichotomy between the left's revolutionary rhetoric and the actual ideological stage of development of the majority of the Czech working class, including members of the Red Unions. Zápotocký implicitly and unwittingly admitted that the "turn to the left" was a fallacy as far as Czech workers were concerned, and hence the whole theoretical basis of the new left's critique of the MVS and KSČ leaderships was essentially unfounded.

In the following months such analytical observations as Zápotocký's became increasingly rare. Lozovsky, in his element in the new leftist atmosphere, re-entered the fray in March attacking the MVS conception of "unity at any price."²⁷ As an example he claimed that,

there have been instances in Czecho-Slovakia when communists in reformist trade unions voted for the Amsterdam candidates and called on others to do likewise, in opposition to the Red Trade Union candidates. This was done in the name of unity, whereas it was nothing but the most blatant opportunism.²⁸

Zápotocký too noted the tendency towards "mechanical unity from above in support of 'industrial peace' and cooperation with the bourgeoisie . . ."²⁹ In another article he disclosed that "on this again we clash with many of our comrades in the Red Unions . . ."³⁰ This theme was later taken up by Slánský at the fifth KSČ congress, when he rebuked the Chemical section for pursuing policies which were ". . . nothing more than the practice of industrial peace," leading only nine strikes in 1928.³¹

The Moscow Congresses

It was in this atmosphere of conflict, tension and impending crisis that the fourth Profintern congress met in Moscow from 17 March to 3 April 1928. In tune with the resolution of February, Arno Hais and other MVS delegates indulged in self-criticism, admitting that the Red Unions lacked adequate contact with the masses and that centralisation of the MVS was excessive.³² Kohn is reported to have stated preposterously that Lozovsky had insufficiently criticised the revolutionary trade union movement in Czechoslovakia.

We want severe criticism . . . for the decisions of the Third World Congress have not been carried out in our country.³³

He argued that the MVS had become a mere "transit house" for thousands of workers who came and went.³⁴ Membership had dropped by 11 percent since 1924. He concluded his speech by demanding a collective leadership in the MVS.³⁵ The Profintern spokesman, Gej, saw the over-centralisation of the MVS as the overriding fault, but this was denied by an unnamed Czech representative.³⁶ Indeed, the majority of MVS delegates were adamant that the united union form of organisation should be retained, voting by fourteen to eleven to reject the

resolution on the financial autonomy of sections.³⁷ Although certain modifications could be considered, the Czechs openly resisted Moscow-sponsored changes in the MVS statutes.³⁸

By far the most significant outcome of the Profintern congress was the formation of a collective leadership in the MVS, the aim of which was to transform the union into:

...an organisation built up on the basis of proletarian democracy by affording its membership the opportunity to develop as great an initiative as possible, to arouse the energy of the masses, to draw them into decision-making, to awaken their activity and to lead them independently into sharp struggles against capitalism and reformism.³⁹

The Profintern also proposed the decentralisation of the MVS. Member sections should have greater financial and administrative autonomy, should retain 30 percent of their dues, not 25 percent as before, and the independence of lower union organs should be guaranteed on the basis of "proletarian democracy" and "revolutionary discipline." Furthermore, Moscow returned with renewed vigour to its demand of 1922, namely the formation of "industrial unions" as opposed to Hais's "One Big Union."⁴⁰

An enlarged MVS board meeting on 22 April "unanimously" ratified the decisions of the congress and elected a five-member "collective leadership" composed of Josef Hais, Zápotocký, Adolf Baier, Václav Nosek and Jaroslav Šilhánek, the last four all being representatives of the pro-Moscow left. The task of this new body was to implement Profintern decrees and to activate and enliven organisational life within the union, encompassing all section, regional, local and group functionaries. The slogan of the day was "To the factories, to the plants, to the masses!"⁴¹ The Hais group maintained later that the leftist members of the collective leadership abused their positions, creating conflicts among individual officials and section secretaries and thus weakening the overall foundations of the union.⁴² Such conflicts were inevitable given the bi-polarisation which must have occurred at all levels in the MVS administration between advocates of the new and old methods. In this sense, the establishment of a collective leadership strongly leftist in character was most harmful for the internal development of the MVS.

Another divisive and harmful development was the increased interference of the Profintern in domestic Czechoslovak affairs. In early 1928 an agent by the name of Weinberg had arrived in Prague to investigate the situation within the Red Unions, and in the summer Gej, a staunch critic of the MVS leadership, visited Czechoslovakia "...to cooperate in the fulfillment of the conclusions made at the fourth congress and to prepare the third MVS congress," which was scheduled for late 1928.⁴³ The pressure of these, one suspects, less than impartial observers did little to unite the Red Unions and KSČ. Indeed, according to Hájek's autobiography, certain MVS leaders such as Nádvorník, Sejkpa, Černý, Bílek (leatherworkers) and others resented the interference of the "Soviet comrades" in work hitherto entrusted to experienced trade union secretaries. They argued that the new methods were unsuitable for Czechoslovak conditions.⁴⁴

An even more damning account was Arno Hais's autobiographical statement made shortly after the Second World War when he was brought to trial for collaborating with the Nazis. He documented, albeit in a brief form, the behind-the-scenes developments at the fourth Profintern congress, stating that Hájek supported the Soviet and German viewpoint that the MVS should be split up (*rozdělení*). The majority of MVS delegates was strongly against such a move and vetoed all proposals and decisions that would have damaged the union. Moreover, Hais asserted that he was kept in Moscow after the end of the congress in order not to "interfere" in events in Prague.⁴⁵ If this statement is accurate, it demonstrates the extent to which Moscow intervened in Czech affairs and proves that the Profintern was intent on destroying the MVS.

It was also evident that the party was divided on the trade union question. The official KSČ evaluation of the *Rudé právo* discussion far from attacking the past policies of the Red Unions emphasised that the MVS was a revolutionary organisation, which led a great number of struggles, endeavoured to revolutionise the workers, and resisted "frequently and successfully" the opportunist tactics of the reformists. There was a significant difference between the MVS and Social Democratic unions. "Some comrades" went too far in their criticisms of the Red Unions.⁴⁶ Public defence of the MVS, however, became more and more infrequent, a good example being the KSČ national conference held on 16 and 17 June.

Speakers at the conference renewed the onslaught against the MVS, including attacks on Hais in person. Both Kohn and Zápotocký accused the Hais leadership of scarcely implementing one Profintern congress decision from 1924. Similarly at the fourth congress it had recognised its mistakes, but had still insisted that Moscow's decrees were unenforceable in Czechoslovakia because the proletariat rejected them. This proved that Hais and his colleagues openly supported reformism. Most ominously, Zápotocký allegedly said that the KSČ Central Committee, in agreement with the ECCI and the Executive of the Profintern, had resolved to dispose of those elements who gave no guarantee of fulfilling the new communist aims in the MVS.⁴⁷ He followed up this threat at the sixth Comintern congress in July 1928 by declaring that a collective leadership had replaced the "individual leadership of the MVS," a direct reference to Hais.⁴⁸ Indeed, Hais's position became increasingly untenable in the summer months of 1928. According to Hájek, Hais instructed him in June to publish an article in *Dělník* stating that he could no longer cooperate with the collective leadership and that he was therefore surrendering his functions. Hájek decided not to print the article as he considered it an indirect appeal for the membership to come out in support of Hais against the collective leadership.⁴⁹

Právo lidu offered a quite different interpretation. The SDP daily maintained that Hais had been disposed of and had "gone on holiday." Furthermore, Nádvorník had been expelled from the communist cell in the Prague district of Strašnice. The significance of these developments, according to *Právo lidu*, was that the last semblance of trade union independence had been broken since now the MVS would submit totally to the *diktat* of the KSČ and the "Bolsheviseurs."⁵⁰ Police reports confirm that the move against Hais "... evoked a very unfavourable impression among the ranks of the workers," and one party representative from Kladno pointed to the "harsh consequences" of Hais's dismissal and to the growing discontent of members in both the MVS and KSČ. Another report contended that the workers did not welcome the sacking of Hais and Nádvorník, largely because they stood by the principle that trade unions should not be politicised. Older unionists were convinced that Zápotocký would put the MVS entirely at the service of the KSČ political leadership.⁵¹

The true circumstances of Hais's removal may never be discovered. Whether he was dismissed or forced to resign, it seems clear that Moscow

and the left in the party and unions were set on ridding the MVS of all "opportunistic elements." Hais, at sixty-two years of age, may have reluctantly yielded to pressure, because he felt incapable of resisting the onslaught launched by the overwhelmingly leftist collective leadership. He may well have felt isolated, all too aware that the "Bolshevists" enjoyed the active backing of the Comintern and Profintern and no doubt that of the "Soviet comrades" in Czechoslovakia.

Whatever the case, Hais's seat on the collective leadership went to yet another firm leftist, Josef Jonáš. This completed the "new line" as far as the upper echelons of the MVS were concerned. In August, the Profintern issued directives designed to strengthen the left in the lower organs of the union apparatus. One passage of the resolution exemplified Moscow's willingness to sacrifice Hais's supporters throughout the union administration. The relevant paragraph talked of the need for "new proletarian forces" in the apparatuses of both the MVS centre and the individual sections, with the aim of removing "reformist tendencies" in the "former leadership." New worker elements would "... assume leading functions in union organisations" and the "upper cadre of the entire union and its separate sections" would be "revived."⁵² This cadre policy seriously jeopardised the position of the old union leaders and is more proof that Moscow was prepared to split the MVS.

On the question of organisational structure, too it is evident that by the summer leftist influence was beginning to tell, despite continuing resistance. As early as May, a conference of section boards had called for the introduction of Profintern decrees and demanded administrative independence for all sections by 1 July.⁵³ The demand was not carried out, however, for an enlarged MVS board meeting on 15 July warned that organisational changes should not be implemented "mechanically."⁵⁴ Moreover, in September another meeting discussed the reorganisation measures and concluded, "from the course of the deliberations it was obvious that it is necessary to overcome significant difficulties in reorganisation . . .," even though "some progress" had been made.⁵⁵

The sixth Comintern congress, held from 17 July to 1 September 1928, witnessed several fierce attacks on the MVS leadership.⁵⁶ Pavel Reiman, one of the most consistently vociferous adversaries of the Red Unions, said that "the main struggle in Czechoslovakia must be waged against rightist-opportunistic deviations." The MVS had adopted a

"...completely incorrect opportunist course," suppressing all mass initiative and relying merely on the united front from above.⁵⁷ From a leftist viewpoint, Reiman's criticisms were justified. For example, in late July the MVS miners' section in Ostrava-Karviná had called for joint action with all socialist unions. Pergl, the leader of the local Red Unions, sent a letter to the OSČ and *Gewerkschaftsbund* leaders appealing for united action in the struggle for higher wages.⁵⁸ The MVS executive likewise never renounced contact with their Social Democratic counterparts, as demanded by the new line. As late as March, 1929 the MVS board issued a statement on the validity of joint action with higher union bodies and on the "necessity of joint progress with all trade union organisations" if a "civil war" between revolutionary and reformist workers was to be averted. Reformist unions were not considered "yellow" organisations, as the left believed.⁵⁹ For the old guard MVS leadership the united front from above was still valid, even in direct contravention of Profintern decisions, which demanded that,

... the tactic of the united front from above and cooperation with reformist trade unions must be broken... (since) reformist leaders are agents of capitalism.⁶⁰

Apart from the Comintern congress, public polemics in the communist press were generally muted in the summer and early autumn of 1928. Even *Rudé právo* and *Komunistická revue* refrained from any unwarranted attacks on the MVS, perhaps partly because several union leaders were espousing the new line, at least in theory.⁶¹ Both Josef and Arno Hais had been forced into retirement in silent opposition to the collective leadership. Behind-the-scenes activity was doubtless far more hectic.

The signal for the campaign to restart was the Open Letter of the ECCI to the KSČ in October, 1928. The letter severely criticised the party's "opportunist conception of united front tactics" and called quite plainly for a fight against "rightist dangers." In the trade union movement, "a speedy reorganisation of the international trade union federation" had to be freely discussed. The highly self-critical reply of the Central Committee revealed the powerful presence of the new left. It was recognised that the opportunist nature of the party's mistakes was "... fully proved by its trade union activity."⁶²

Soon after, the "calm" in Czechoslovakia was rudely shattered by a vituperative attack on the MVS and KSČ by Gottwald published in late October in the form of a special supplement to *Rudé právo*. He too berated the "opportunistic" character of Red Union work, which he defined as the total lack of a strike strategy, a predominant reliance on the united front from above, an inability to mobilise the masses, the attempt to strengthen the Red Unions to the detriment of communist activity in reformist unions, insufficient training of members, the bureaucratic rigidity of the entire apparatus, and ineffective fraction work. Gottwald then turned his attention to the party. There was a lack of understanding of the huge political significance of trade union work, as seen by the fact that the vast majority of leading comrades took no part in the *Rudé právo* discussion. Furthermore, party leaders had displayed passivity in fulfilling the decisions of the fourth Profintern congress and ninth ECCI plenum, many of them believing that the party was not strong enough to eliminate the opportunist system in the MVS. Hitherto, this was understood merely as the "annihilation" of the "liquidationist elements," whereas in fact, Gottwald argued, the crux of the matter was the need for an ideological struggle against the liquidators, not simply "mechanical steps." The growth of ideological and political maturity of the membership was vital, not just a "purging process" in union groups.⁶³

The internal and external situation of the MVS leadership was rapidly becoming intolerable by November, 1928. Gottwald's attack may have been one of the reasons for the controversial attempt of the Chemical section leaders to form a new union in that month. The affair is shrouded in mystery, although from press and police reports one can discern the general scenario. It appears that sometime in November, the section chairman, Ferdinand Halík, and secretary, Nádvorník, worked out a proposal for the statutes of a new all-trade union organisation to be named the Union of Chemical, Building and Brick Workers. An enlarged MVS board meeting held on 25 November to discuss the affair, accused "...individual functionaries and employees" of blocking MVS reorganisation, preferring "...the more comfortable road of reformism and opportunism." Such elements had been discovered in several sections, for instance one Kristlík in the metalworkers' section, but the Chemical leaders remained the principal danger.⁶⁴ Halík's and Nádvorník's undertaking

was done "against the will of the MVS central board and without the legal decision of the relevant union bodies." They affirmed that their intention was not to split the MVS, but to ensure the property and assets of the Chemical section in the event of a split. The meeting rejected this claim, stating that only the forthcoming MVS congress was empowered to alter the union's statutes and organisational form.⁶⁵

The Chemical section had been in disarray for some time, as borne out by a meeting of the OSČ Trade Union Council of Greater Prague on 31 August 1928, at which Prášek claimed that the section had lost more than half of its membership during the 1920s. Its leaders were on the way to founding a completely independent Chemical section, which would signify "... the beginning of the end for the MVS."⁶⁶ If this was true, Halík, Nádvorník and the other chemical leaders had been planning their course of action for at least three months prior to November.

The affair, indeed, remained far from solved. Jonáš added fuel to the fire by asserting that the Chemical leaders were reformists in the mold of Tetenka in the Builders' Union.⁶⁷ The Chemical section meanwhile distributed a pamphlet on 1 December calling for "a united, firmly centralised all-trade union organisation."⁶⁸ This new body was, however, to be a base for carrying out Profintern decisions.⁶⁹ In a second attempt to resolve the dispute, a conference of section boards on 9 December decided to create a special twelve-member commission under the chairmanship of a Profintern representative. The matter was to be concluded within fourteen days. At the conference, Zápotocký declared that all MVS organs had to be purged of "reformist remnants and leftovers." Hais acknowledged that he had given up cooperating with the collective leadership because he disagreed with the new line in the MVS. He remained opposed though to all efforts aimed at splitting the Red Unions, Nádvorník denied that the Chemical board wanted to separate from the MVS, but Moscow's representative, Fritz Heckert, fiercely condemned his actions.⁷⁰ In a leftist statement issued later in December, Hais was also implicated in the "plot," the main aim of which was to render the introduction of Profintern decrees impossible and to "flee" from the revolutionary class front into the camp of the reformists.⁷¹

The Central Secretariat of the Chemical section interpreted events rather differently, proclaiming that there were "certain elements" in the present MVS leadership who wished to expel the chemical leaders

"at any price." The latter were opposed to the new organisational basis of the MVS as it constituted a danger to the Red trade union movement. The "double-dealing" of the collective leadership was damaging the Chemical section, not vice-versa. The Chemical executives firmly denied that they were "Tetenkovites," "splitters" or "betrayers," and as if to prove it they called on their members not to be provoked into actions that would harm the movement.⁷²

The Chemical section found perhaps unwanted support from the SDP. *Právo lidu* adopted a stern, anti-KSČ line, claiming that the Chemical board was attempting to extricate itself from the "bondage" of the party leadership and to guarantee union independence in financial affairs. The "reformist" section was trying in vain to prevent a split in the MVS, while the Politburo was creating a situation whereby a split would rapidly arise.⁷³ The meeting of section boards on 9 December had, according to *Právo lidu*, been "unusually stormy." The majority of unions were highly dissatisfied with the MVS and political leaderships. Hais, Nádvorník, Krátký and the representatives of the railway workers' and miners' sections delivered "sharp speeches," while Jonáš, Bolen and Kohn left to a storm of protest.⁷⁴ The National Socialist daily *České slovo* (The Czech Word) inferred that the MVS leadership was:

totally disoriented and confused... a part of the experienced trade unionists in the MVS realise that the strict political line in the workers' struggle ordered by the Communist International is impossible in Czechoslovak conditions.⁷⁵

After the allotted fourteen day period, yet another joint conference of the Chemical section and the MVS board met on 23 December. The outcome was greeted with misplaced optimism in the union press. *Dělník* claimed that the meeting "successfully resolved the controversial questions," the resolution being adopted even by those comrades who held "incorrect opinions." Since the dispute was judged to be over, a struggle against "right-wing deviations" could go ahead. "Reformist tendencies" were denounced and Profintern decisions and the "new course" in the MVS were fully endorsed, thus signifying that in reality the dispute was only just beginning.⁷⁶

The "compromise solution" was in fact a charade, as by the end of 1928 the adherents of the old line could no longer cooperate with the new left. The one tangible outcome of the dispute was the postponement of the third MVS congress from January to late March, 1929. This was done "on the recommendation of the party leadership and leading organs of the R.I.L.U. . . ." ⁷⁷ The intervening two months were to be used for an "ideological campaign" to propagate Profintern decisions. ⁷⁸ This in itself was an indication of the future road of the MVS, a road which left no room for "reformists" and "opportunists." Parallel developments in the KSČ, where the Jílek leadership was faltering under the combined pressure of the new left and Moscow, made the position of the old guard in the MVS doubly untenable. ⁷⁹ Their plight was summed up in the slogan: "From opportunist passivity to Bolshevik activity!" ⁸⁰

The Schism

The fight against "opportunist passivity" was stepped up with even greater urgency in early 1929. Reiman demanded a continuing battle against the MVS leaders.

The opportunist passivity of many trade union secretaries is a notorious fact . . . It is no secret that both *the Red Union leadership and the membership are contaminated with opportunism, far worse than the party.*

Thus, the party had to initiate a "sharp turn to the left" in the unions. ⁸¹ On 27 January, the KSČ Politburo issued a declaration on the situation within the MVS, stating ominously that,

. . . at the present time the influence of the KSČ on the MVS and all its sections should be enforced systematically . . . and the revolutionary unity of the MVS maintained.

Such influence was to be enforced by the formation of communist fractions inside all Red Union groups, although this should not take on the appearance of "mechanical interference." A campaign was to be launched to isolate the "opportunist tendencies" in the chemical, textile, agricultural

and metal worker sections, since functionaries in these organisations and elsewhere in the MVS "...do not understand the swing to the left among the masses." On the contrary, they held an "...incorrect, opportunist viewpoint on the question of the passivity of the masses."⁸²

On the same day as the Politburo declaration, a group of MVS officials from Greater Prague called, in effect, for the replacement of the Chemical leaders.

The introduction of the new course... demands unconditionally that new young revolutionary elements be taken into the higher organs of the Chemical section.

The group argued that the Red Unions were dependent on the reformists during strikes and relied on incorrect united front tactics.⁸³ The perfect opportunity for the left to discredit still further the strike strategy of the MVS was the strike of north Bohemian textile workers in late January and early February, 1929. The ideological basis of the dispute was the Comintern thesis of the "shift to the left" among the working class, a theory instrumental in the new left's struggle against the MVS and KSČ leaderships. The textile strike was thus designed as a testing ground for the implementation of the united front from below and for a revolutionary strike strategy, independent of the reformist leaders. As younger Czech and Slovak historians noted in the 1960s, the strike was also deliberately used by the Gottwald left to attack "reformism" and "opportunism" within the party and unions, and hence had direct political, as well as economic, aims.⁸⁴

The political involvement of the KSČ Central Committee was evident from December, 1928. The dispute was described as "the most important action" in the work of all party bodies. The MVS textile section had originally demanded a 15-25 percent wage increase for all textile workers in the republic, later changed to a 10-15 percent increase.⁸⁵ The demand was predictably rejected, whereupon the MVS and its textile section, which had previously proclaimed the dispute "inevitable" and had exhorted workers to elect strike committees, issued a strike call and ordered a general mobilisation and struggle of the working class.⁸⁶ Jan Sýkora, the secretary of the MVS textile section, doubted the validity of this radical stance, believing that objective conditions for a strike were absent.

He also resented the way the party dictated to the unions.⁸⁷ It has subsequently been affirmed that Sýkora preferred to resign rather than be "commanded" by the party leftists.⁸⁸ Slánský regarded this attitude as an openly "liquidationist" platform,⁸⁹ and Reiman later claimed that Sýkora was in fact advocating the independence of the Red Unions from the party.⁹⁰

Sýkora was not alone in his condemnation of the action. Several MVS leaders, including Zápotocký, felt that the strike was lost in advance, although while it lasted public polemics were kept to a minimum.⁹¹ Despite the resistance within the MVS, the strike began on 28 January, allegedly on the direct insistence of the leftist Politburo.⁹² Sýkora was quite explicit, describing it as "... an affair of the new, young functionaries in the KSČ, and particularly of secretaries Gottwald and Slánský."⁹³ The strike was a failure. Greatly varying estimates exist of the number of participants, ranging from 10,000 to 3,050 out of a total of 60,000 to 70,000 workers in the Liberec-Jablonec-Frydlant textile region.⁹⁴ Considering the fact that the MVS claimed 17,000 members in that area, the strike was poorly supported even by communist workers.⁹⁵ In other localities it attracted even less backing, and was thus terminated after a few days having failed to secure the proposed wage increases.⁹⁶

The main reason for the failure, according to the leftists, was the opposition manifested by party and Red Union members. At the tenth ECCI plenum in July 1929, Reiman maintained that,

... the greater part of the trade union militants and of the Party membership tried to restrain the development of the class struggle of the textile workers, while strike-breaking developed within the ranks of the Communist Party and of the Red trade unions.

The German party leader, Ernst Thälmann, contended that in one factory Red Union officials had organised strike-breaking "under the protection of the gendarmerie." For the new left the lesson of the strike was that,

... opportunist tendencies exist not only among the heads, but among fairly large masses, down to the cadres of functionaries in the Red trade unions, ...⁹⁷

At the opposite extreme, the textile strike attracted extensive coverage in the Social Democratic press. *Právo lidu* asserted that the pre-strike negotiations had been "madness," and soon after declared the new KSČ strike strategy "absolute foolishness," never before seen in the history of the labour movement.⁹⁸ Following the defeat of the strike the paper reported a "mass withdrawal of north Bohemian textile workers from the Communist Party."⁹⁹

Within the Red trade union movement, the strike was pivotal in crystallising the opposition of the old guard to the policies of the new left. Many MVS leaders saw the defeat of the textile workers as signifying the total invalidity of the revolutionary strike strategy. Šýkora bore the brunt of the leftist backlash. He was accused of demanding the creation of an independent textile union.¹⁰⁰ Owing to this and his stance against the new KSČ leadership, the communist press erupted in a storm of protest against him and other members of the textile executive. They were "seriously threatening the unity of the textile section and the MVS. . . ."¹⁰¹ Moreover, they had adopted an openly "liquidationist standpoint," propagating the "capitulation" of the workers before the textile barons.¹⁰² The "reformists and liquidators" had begun a counter-revolutionary attack on the decisions of the Profintern.¹⁰³ Šýkora's aim was to split the revolutionary movement and join the strike-breakers and reformists.¹⁰⁴ He was also condemned for disseminating a leaflet urging workers to be "disloyal" to the KSČ and criticising the "putschist" tactics of the Red Unions and the party. The outcome was predictable. At an MVS board meeting on 2 and 3 March, Šýkora was suspended from his function as secretary of the textile section by the narrow margin of nine votes to seven.¹⁰⁵ He was then expelled from the KSČ on the recommendation of the Profintern Central European Bureau, another indication of external interference.¹⁰⁶

Before his expulsion, Šýkora had been subjected to fierce vilification at the fifth KSČ congress held between 18 and 23 February 1929.¹⁰⁷ Turning the failure of the textile strike on its head, the new Central Committee repudiated Šýkora's position and dubbed the struggle a success for the new tactics.¹⁰⁸ More importantly, the congress was the crowning, though carefully staged, triumph of the Bolshevik left in its fight against the Jílek party leadership. Jílek himself, Bolen, Hais and others were ousted from the Politburo to be superseded by younger, staunchly pro-Moscow

figures like Slánský, Reiman, Jan Šverma, Evžen Fried and Guttman. Of the Politburo elected at the fourth party congress only Gottwald, himself the leading leftist, Haken and Zápotocký survived.¹⁰⁹ The Comintern letter to the congress praised the Gottwald group for fulfilling its directives against the "right-wing liquidationists" around Jílek and the Trotskyites around Neurath. As for the opposition in the Red Unions, the letter described them as "secret adherents" of Heinrich Brandler and August Thalheimer, the ex-leaders of the German Communist Party accused of withdrawing from the world communist movement.¹¹⁰

"The defeat of the Jílek group also marked the defeat of the Hais leadership in the MVS."¹¹¹ Indeed, on the trade union question the fifth KSČ congress sounded the deathknell for the entire policy of the former leaders. Slánský and Kohn, delivering the main addresses on the economic and trade union issues, vehemently rejected the idea of union collaboration from above.¹¹² Even more ominously, Lozovsky and Pyatnitsky in speeches also in February called for personnel changes in the Red Union leadership, thus giving powerful impetus to the domestic campaign in Czechoslovakia.¹¹³ In this extremely tense situation the Chemical section leaders, supported by several other prominent secretaries and officials, decided to preempt their imminent downfall by securing the property, assets and presses of the MVS. Their action proved to be the climax of the bitter struggle between the left and right in the Red trade union movement.

Details of the hectic events of March, 1929 are confused and often fragmentary, both sides offering vastly differing interpretations. It is clear, however, that once again Halík and Nádvorník, this time with the participation of Hais and Sýkora, were the instigators of the move. According to a police report, Hais was not easily persuaded to take part in any activity that threatened the unity of the MVS, but after personal visits from Nádvorník, Sýkora and other secretaries he resolved to join them.¹¹⁴

On 10 March, three weeks before the third MVS congress was scheduled to convene, Halík, chairman of the union, called a meeting of the enlarged MVS board. Only those members who had been elected at the second congress were invited, which meant that members later installed by the KSČ and collective leadership were *personae non grata*. Notwithstanding this several were present, including Zápotocký, Šverma and Hájek. Hais

did not attend the meeting. The official minutes give ample proof not only of the heated and rowdy nature of the proceedings, but also of the steadfast resolve shown by Halík in his role as chairman. The initial area of dispute centred on the vital question of who was eligible to vote. Zápotocký attacked Halík for inviting people who were not even members of the MVS, while the Profintern representative, Walter, argued that the whole board, not merely Halík, should decide on who could vote. The latter, according to the minutes, simply ignored this remark, although votes were taken soon after.

The first was on whether the leftists Šimčák, Wágner and Günzl were eligible to vote. An eleven to ten majority voted against this proposal. Halík then proceeded to enfranchise Havránek, a rightist member of the Chemical section, whereupon Zápotocký angrily declared all votes invalid. Following more excited scenes, Černý proposed to replace the "partisan" Walter as Profintern representative by someone "more objective." This was carried by ten votes to nine. Halman, vice-chairman of the MVS and a leading official in the textile section, then proposed what was the main thrust of the meeting. Firstly, he demanded the suspension of Hájek as editor of *Dělník* and his replacement by someone who would "adhere to the interests of the MVS." The vote ended eight to eight, whereupon Halík personally suspended Hájek in his capacity as chairman of the meeting.¹¹⁵ Halman continued the offensive by demanding the suspension of the "so-called" collective leadership and of Zápotocký as General Secretary of the union. His successor was to be Hais. During Halman's speech Steinz and Jankovský noisily protested, for which they were expelled from the meeting by Halík. Nosek was moved to say, "shame on you, Halík!" Finally, the vote on the suspension of the collective leadership was taken, Halman's proposal being carried by eight votes to seven. Halík then closed the meeting with the words, "we shall not go over to the reformists. All we want is for the MVS to be an *independent organisation*."¹¹⁶ This final phrase sums up the reason for the old guard's action. It was designed to free the MVS from the interference and domination of the KSČ, or more exactly of the new leftist party leadership.

A special edition of *Dělník*, then in the hands of the Hais-Halík group, confirmed that the collective leadership, together with Hájek, Steinz and Jankovský, had been suspended for activities aimed at splitting the

MVS.¹¹⁷ Similarly, in an article published in May, Arno Hais wrote that owing to the "interference of the Politburo of the KSČ and its press," the MVS board was "forced" to suspend the collective leadership. Hais considered this decision an honest attempt to preserve MVS unity and to group together those sincere revolutionary trade unionists and political workers who were "disgusted" by the activity of the collective leadership and the ultra-left in the Politburo.¹¹⁸ On thing which obviously aroused concern was the collective leadership's alleged waste of union finances. Hundreds of thousands of crowns had been spent on expensive office equipment and superfluous new employees, while unemployment benefits had been cut.¹¹⁹

Predictably, *Rudé právo* launched a massive propaganda campaign. A lengthy article on 12 March accused the "liquidators" of carrying out a putsch, the main culprits being Hais, Nádvorník and Sýkora. They were following the example of the old enemies, Hampl and Tetenka. The next day they were "agents of the bourgeoisie," and on 14 March were "worse than the reformists," more like "fascist usurpers."¹²⁰ This hysterical note was also struck by Kolský at the metalworkers' congress at the end of March. He stated that "Hais's fascist methods must be condemned."¹²¹

All the rhetoric did not prevent the Hais group from further expulsions and steps to safeguard MVS property. A second enlarged board meeting was held on 19 March attended by fourteen members and Hais himself. According to Halík, this number represented a majority of the board. Hais proposed the expulsion of Baier, Nosek, Vobořil, Barášek, Jankovský and Steinz. All were carried unanimously. In a long speech, Hais spoke of the "terror methods" used by the Politburo to enforce its will on trade union organisations, including during the textile strike. The overall effect was that members were abandoning MVS sections, believing that the union was "under the *diktat* of the Politburo." Such a situation demanded a "radical change," and hence the collective leadership had been suspended.¹²²

Also on 19 March, the Hais group occupied the MVS headquarters on Ječná repelling a crowd of party supporters with the assistance of the police. They later gained legal recognition of their right to ownership of the union's property and presses.¹²³ The same day a pro-KSČ enlarged board meeting expelled Hais, Halík and Halman from the MVS and reinstated

the collective leadership.¹²⁴ Six days earlier, these "liquidators" had been expelled from the Communist Party: Josef and Arno Hais, Halík, Černý, Handlř, Krátký, Douda, Mikeš, Jakoubek, Mendl and Grünzweig.¹²⁵

Although the situation was beyond reconciliation, Moscow decided to arbitrate in the dispute and called a three-sided meeting in Dresden on 26 and 27 March. The main participants were Lozovsky, Georgi Dimitrov and Heckert for the Profintern Executive, Zápotocký, Jonáš and Nosek for the collective leadership, and Josef and Arno Hais, Nádvořník, Halík and Sýkora for the MVS. Several proposals were worked out, all of which were automatically accepted by the Zápotocký group. Hais was reluctant to agree, wanting the matter to be resolved at an MVS board meeting on 31 March. It appears the main bone of contention was ignored in the Profintern proposals, namely the central question of the scope of authority the Gottwald party leadership had over MVS affairs. Hais demanded a reconvened party congress to replace the leftists, which was totally unacceptable to the Profintern.¹²⁶

In an article on the schism, Lozovsky wrote that,

the reasons for the crisis lie in the fact that the Communist Party and revolutionary trade unions of Czechoslovakia have many democratic traditions and remnants in their ranks.

Many Czech communists were described as "philistines," and Lozovsky denounced the impertinence of Hais and Sýkora thus:

they demand non-interference of the Party in the affairs of the trade unions, but they themselves desire to change the policy and personal composition of the controlling organs of the Communist Party.¹²⁷

Following their refusal to abide by the Dresden solution, Josef and Arno Hais, Halík, Nádvořník and Sýkora were expelled from the ranks of the Profintern in April 1929.¹²⁸ But not only the MVS was torn asunder. The KSČ too was decimated. A group of twenty-five party deputies and senators voiced their opposition to the ultra-left leadership and expressed a lack of faith in the Politburo. Among the signatories were Bolen, Burian, Houser, Jílek, Muna, Neurath, Skalák and Toužil.¹²⁹ Seven

of these were expelled from the party on 6 June, having "...refused to abandon the platform of Hais..."¹³⁰ With the splits and expulsions, the fratricidal war within the communist movement reached its climax. The Social Democratic standpoint on the issue was perhaps best summarised by the OSČ miners' journal, *Na zdar*:

there has not been such a deplorable and repulsive picture in the labour movement as the one presented today by the Communist Party.¹³¹

One important question has yet to be discussed, and that is the relative strengths of the two rival factions. *Rudé právo* confidently asserted that the miners, metal, agricultural, leather, glass, railway and state workers, together with the "overwhelming majority" of the textile workers and a "large part" of the chemical section all opposed the liquidators.¹³² Eleven section representatives likewise came out against the "putsch."¹³³ In contrast to this, one can surmise from a report made by Halík and Hais in October, 1929 that thirteen members of the MVS board, as elected at the second congress, backed the action of the leadership. They were: Halík, Halman, Sejkpa, Černý, Hloušek, Havránek, Kuřfirt, Jakoubek, Mikeš, Grünzweig, Nachtman, Douda and Vaněk. Twelve members supported the collective leadership: Baier, Jankovský, Steinz, Šupík, Nosek, Vanderer, Tichý, Zamrazil, Kochol, Kulhánek, Vobořil and Šmudla.¹³⁴ MVS sections were similarly split down the middle. Later Czech observers contend that a majority of sections and their leaders condemned Hais.¹³⁵ One Western historian argued that the opposite was the case.¹³⁶ As for the membership, the KSČ daily alleged that "95 percent of MVS members are firmly behind the collective leaders."¹³⁷ This was pure fiction, although it does seem as if a slight majority stood behind the party. Official statistics show that at the end of 1929 the MVS (Hais) had 76,946 members and the new Red Unions under Zápotocký had 88,627.¹³⁸

These openly pro-KSČ unions held their founding congress in early May, 1929, and established a new organisation called the Revolutionary Centre of Industrial Unions. Known commonly as the Red Unions, the centre continued to function until early 1939 when, under Nazi pressure, it was formally disbanded.¹³⁹ The MVS, under Josef Hais, existed independently for over a year holding a congress in December 1929, but

in July 1930 it merged with the OSČ. Hence, the MVS leaders did what they said they would never do, rejoin the reformists. Later that year their representatives attended the ninth OSČ congress.¹⁴⁰ The events of 1929 left both the KSČ and the Red Unions immeasurably weaker. One may even argue that neither fully recovered in the 1930s, but that is another story.

Many different factors played a role in the schism in the MVS. In my opinion, it would be wrong to over-emphasise the more personal aspects of the dispute. Certainly by 1928 there existed great antagonisms between Josef Hais in particular and several adherents of the left such as Kohn, Hájek, Slánský and Gottwald.¹⁴¹ Personalised attacks in the press and clashes behind the scenes did play an important role in the developments of 1928 and 1929, but it should be stressed that these clashes stemmed far more from a profound ideological and tactical schism rather than from purely personal feuds and jealousies. The revolutionary tactics expounded by the Comintern and Profintern in 1928 and 1929 formed the basis of this schism. The concepts of "class against class," of perceiving Social Democrats as "yellow" or "social fascists," and of undertaking independent strike action, were fundamental to the rift. The heart of the dispute, however, was the relationship of the party to the unions.

The line adopted at the time by the KSČ leftists, which many present-day Czech and Slovak historians still regard as essentially valid, was summed up in a pamphlet entitled, *The New Way of the Red Unions*.¹⁴² Hais, Nádvorník, Halík, Sýkora and other "liquidationist elements" were said to have:

... seized the leadership of the union with the help of the authorities and thus, by secretly sabotaging the resolution of the fourth R.I.L.U. congress, openly attacked the revolutionary line of the Red Unions.

The "fascist activity" of 10 March, 1929 confirmed their desire to break up the MVS. They had refused to cooperate with the collective leadership, to follow the revolutionary strike strategy and to implement Profintern rulings on a whole range of issues concerning the internal structure of the union and its future activity. Although the new left recognised that "... opportunist and wavering elements (were) not only in the higher

organs, but also in the groups and mass of members," and that passivity had spread among the membership, it was asserted that a majority opposed the "liquidators."¹⁴³ The blame for the split was thus firmly attached to the Hais-Halík leadership, who worked to remove the MVS from party control and to rejoin the reformists.

From the MVS side, the post-split editions of *Rudý odborář* offer a mine of information on why the executive acted as it did. On tactical and economic questions, the rift was quite evident. "We reject the united front tactic as defended by the Politburo and *Rudé právo*." The party believed that economic struggles could be led by small groups of convinced workers, not by the organisations of the masses. An MVS board statement insisted that members of reformist unions were not "fascists" or "lackeys of the bourgeoisie," but were "our fellow-fighters, our comrades. . . ." For this reason, the board did not reject the united front from below, but at the same time it refused to accept the impossibility of joint contact and action with reformist leaders, a notion which was anathema to the new left. The MVS view on strike strategy also contrasted to the new line. The board emphasised that strikes should be initiated only when there was a guarantee of "decisive success." They should be short so that the workers could hold out materially and the union would not be financially exhausted.¹⁴⁴

The differences between the two sides were even more pronounced on the question of the party's relationship to the unions. A long and instructive article by Arno Hais in May 1929 claimed that "from the beginning," presumably meaning from the foundation of the MVS, the union leaders had resisted the idea that the Red trade union movement was a component of and subordinate to the Communist Party.

We could not allow the Communist Party leadership to interfere completely mechanically in the affairs of the Red trade union movement.

Furthermore, Hais maintained that,

*it was quite obvious from the first days that the Politburo was conducting a campaign leading towards an open and undeniable split in the MVS.*¹⁴⁵

The party was willing to sacrifice a half of the union membership to ensure that the new line would be pursued. Kohn reportedly stated that the MVS was a "dispensable burden on the policy of the party." To this end, the collective leadership suppressed every manifestation critical of the "Hazardous" policy of the Politburo, consciously misinformed the members and "terrorised" union officials. Hence, the "conflict between the Red Unions and the Politburo . . . was inevitable."¹⁴⁶

The ideological reasons for the schism were most clearly explained in the report to the third MVS congress. The document stated that,

relations in the revolutionary, class labour movement in the past year reached such a state that the board of the MVS, despite being quite willing to work with the leadership of the revolutionary workers' party, the Communist Party, was forced to . . . reject categorically the senseless principles of the present party leaders, which are becoming more obviously associated with anarcho-radical methods, alien to our movement.

More specifically, the report continued that,

. . . it was precisely differing opinions on strike strategy, i.e. on the methods of wage struggles and strikes, on the question of the united front, as well as the issue of the mutual relationship between the party and the unions, which caused the elimination of the so-called collective leadership, which was none other than an exponent of the anarcho-radical leadership of the Communist Party in the ranks of the MVS.¹⁴⁷

This argument was put even more forcibly in the August edition of *Rudý odborář*. The programme of the ultra-left:

. . . was a semi-anarchistic, radical programme designed to split the party, destroy all the traditions of its past and uproot the communist movement from our environmental conditions and relations.

The "opposition" around Guttman, Slánský and Šverma (Gottwald was mysteriously omitted) aimed:

to plunder thoroughly all the traditions of the movement, destroy its close links with the Czechoslovak working class and *make the party a body alien to the Czechoslovak worker*.¹⁴⁸

It is precisely here that the crux of the matter can be found. The old guard MVS leaders, many of whom were schooled in pre-war Social Democratic traditions, were absolutely convinced that the young, ultra-leftists were pursuing policies which were foreign to the Czechoslovak labour movement and to the mentality of the Czechoslovak worker. The sectarian and isolationist tendencies embodied in the new revolutionary strategy were incompatible with the deeply entrenched concept of union interaction. Implicit in this was a rejection of the "turn to the left" thesis and the anti-Social Democratic theory of "class against class." These precepts were seen by the MVS leaders as "alien." Although one cannot claim with any concrete justification that the Hais leadership advocated a clearly defined "Czechoslovak road to socialism," it does seem reasonable to conclude that the basis of its resistance to the Politburo, the collective leadership and the Profintern was an awareness and a conviction that the "new course" in no way corresponded to conditions existing in Czechoslovakia. The ultimate cause of the schism was thus a profound ideological rift between those who were willing, for whatever reason, to subordinate themselves to the revolutionary demands of Moscow and those who wished to preserve a semblance of traditional union practice and a degree of national specificity.

CHAPTER NINE

THE CZECHOSLOVAK EXPERIENCE IN ITS EUROPEAN CONTEXT

The history of the Czech Red trade union movement in the 1920s raises several interesting questions on the nature of relations between Moscow and other European communist parties and trade unions. Clearly, the Czechoslovak experience should not be looked at in isolation, but should be placed in its broader European setting. As this book has sought to prove, a basic dichotomy underlay relations between Moscow and Prague. On the one hand, the Comintern and Profintern asserted the need for greater centralisation and discipline, on the other the majority of KSČ and MVS leaders espoused wider autonomy and a measure of national specificity. By examining developments in three of the major European communist movements we discover that many of the problems, tensions and conflicts that arose in Czechoslovakia were reproduced, albeit in varying forms, in Germany, France and to a lesser extent Britain.

It must be stated at the outset, however, that my intention is not simply to argue that European communists strove constantly to extricate themselves from the "iron grip" of Moscow. This would be a foolhardy undertaking based more on half-truth than truth. Discipline was one of the central tenets of Leninism and there is ample evidence to prove that Comintern intervention in the affairs of national parties was often decisive in "correcting" past failings and in determining future policy.

Moreover, it is undoubtedly the case that many European communists sincerely believed in the international significance of the Bolshevik Revolution, in the authority of the Russian leaders and in the validity of their tactics. Very few had the temerity to suggest that the Comintern line reflected the interests of the Soviet state. Nonetheless, it is equally true that throughout the first decade of the Comintern's existence dissenting voices were raised, ranging from Paul Levi and Ludovic Oskar Frossard on the "right" to Amadeo Bordighi and Ruth Fischer on the "left." The history of all communist parties is littered with resignations, demotions and expulsions. May aim is to discuss this opposition in so far as it bears direct comparison to the situation in Czechoslovakia, without overestimating its extent or importance.

The party which perhaps had least in common with the KSČ and other European parties was the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB).² Firstly, the CPGB was not formed as a result of a painful split in the existing socialist party, but by an amalgamation of leftist groups in the years 1920-1921. Secondly, at no time in the 1920s did the CPGB rival its brother parties in terms of membership or political influence on the working class. It was always a rather tiny, isolated sect. Thirdly, the British party rarely indulged in ideological and theoretical polemics. Indeed, its leaders were agitators, not intellectuals. Ideological debates held little interest for them, and their indifference to dogma, coupled with an often genuine belief in the correctness of Moscow's line, tended to dilute any urge toward independent activity in Britain. Hence, the CPGB was generally more amenable to directives from Moscow than any other major party in Europe.

Finally, the British trade union movement possessed unique traits. The Trades Union Congress (TUC) remained united throughout the 1920s, no breakaway Communist Union being created until 1929. The main reason for this was the fact that the large majority of union executives and members stood loyally behind the reformist TUC leadership. The lack of revolutionary zeal of the British working class became almost legendary in communist circles, regardless of the 1926 General Strike. Acknowledging their own weaknesses, the CPGB leaders on the whole warmly welcomed united front tactics, seeing them at the best means of gaining a foothold in the workers' movement. The tactic appeared to suit local conditions in both the political and trade union spheres by offering a hope of influencing the Labour Party and the TUC.

In the early 1920s the CPGB placed more emphasis on the united front from above hesitating to form a nationwide organisation of left-wing trade unionists within the existing unions. To the consternation of Lovzovsky, it took many months to establish the National Minority Movement (NMM). It was finally created in August 1924, but only after the Profintern Central Council had goaded the party into action. The aim of the NMM was to unite leftist union opposition groups throughout the country, to agitate "from below" in the factories, and ultimately to convert a majority of British workers to the revolutionary class struggle. In the period 1924-1926 the NMM operated relatively successfully, enjoying considerable influence in certain unions and factories, most notably in the mining and engineering industries. By March 1926 it could claim a membership of 957,000.

However, the highlight of the CPGB's commitment to the united front was the Anglo-Russian Committee of 1925-1927. The Committee aroused great optimism in Moscow, its ostensible goal being to pressurise the TUC and by extension the IFTU leaders into uniting with the Soviet unions and the Profintern. On the domestic scene, it was argued that the Committee would radicalise the British labour movement and foster a pro-Soviet sentiment among the working class. Predictably, this uneasy and unlikely relationship remained unconsummated. The Committee was disbanded in September 1927 and the broader aim of international trade union unity floundered on the rock of the "new line" in 1928.

Although the CPGB leadership enthusiastically adopted united front tactics, not all British communists were prepared to follow blindly Moscow's lead on this controversial issue. For instance, in late 1921 and 1922 the party suffered the loss of many members who opposed the new tactic. Furthermore, at the fifth Comintern congress in the summer of 1924 some British delegates displayed a cautious reticence about relying solely on the united front from below. Murphy and MacManus went so far as to suggest that the Comintern should adapt the tactic according to specific local conditions. This earned the British comrades the unenviable rebuke of "right-wing deviationism," and the ECCI talked of paying "much greater attention" to the CPGB to avoid further lapses.²

But it was not until the proclamation of the militant "class against class" theory that the majority of the CPGB executive found itself in fundamental disagreement with Moscow. The classification of the Labour

Party and TUC leaders as "social fascists" signified the definitive end of the united front policies hitherto embraced so zealously by the British party. Only after the direct intervention of the ECCI did the recalcitrants give way to the "new leftists" around Palme Dutt and Harry Pollitt. In the trade union field, the CPGB and NMM were heavily criticised for misapplying the hardline tactics ratified by the fourth Profintern congress. This situation had almost completely changed by mid 1929, communists abandoning work in reformist unions and forming independent revolutionary organisations. Such a sectarian approach increasingly isolated the NMM from the mass of British workers and by the early 1930s the movement had ceased to function, claiming a mere 700 members in 1932.

We can see from this brief survey that the CPGB generally maintained harmonious relations with Moscow, at least until 1928-1929. As Pollitt stated at the tenth ECCI plenum in July 1929, the policy of the party from its very foundation had been that of the Comintern. Party leaders avoided serious clashes with the International, pursued united front tactics in accordance with ECCI directives and rarely sought to act independently.

The same cannot be said of the German Communist Party (KPD).³ It would not be a gross exaggeration to say that of all the European parties the KPD manifested the most consistent hostility towards the central authorities in Moscow. Many high-ranking party and union officials resented Comintern interference and on a number of occasions not only voiced their opposition, but also acted decisively against Moscow's orders.⁴ The most relevant example for our purposes came after the failure of the October 1923 uprising. At that time the mass of KPD members and functionaries rejected the concept of remaining in reformist unions and refused to carry out fraction work, a stance directly comparable to that taken by the MVS in Czechoslovakia. For this reason it is worth examining in some detail the attitude of the KPD to the trade unions.

From its founding congress in late 1918, the KPD had been prey to sectarianism in the trade union movement. Under Rosa Luxemburg's influence, the congress voted unanimously to boycott reformist unions organised in the General German Trade Union Confederation (ADGB or Free Trade Unions), largely because of the leadership's non-revolutionary role during the First World War and in the uprising of November 1918.

The delegates were divided, however, over the question of whether to form independent Red Unions. At first, the party encouraged their formation, but later under Paul Levi and Heinrich Brandler this decision was reversed. Nevertheless, many communist workers refused to join Social Democratic unions and a strong current of anti-reformism was nurtured in the powerful left-wing of the German party.

Several important figures on the right of the KPD, however, called for limited cooperation with the existing unions. Levi, Brandler, Thalheimer and Heckert were among the first in the international communist movement to initiate the united front, even before such tactics had been formally endorsed by the ECCI. Indeed, their activity met with no little success. At the eleventh congress of the ADGB in June 1922 the KPD secured more than one eighth of the delegates, 90 out of 691. This achievement marked the highpoint of communist influence in the German trade union movement.

A sharp downturn occurred following the abortive October 1923 uprising in Saxony and Hamburg. It was after this catastrophe that Moscow's authority began to be most effectively challenged. Brandler and Thalheimer were ousted from the leadership in late 1923, and with them went the now discredited, but Comintern sponsored, united front tactics. This swing to the left made itself acutely felt in the trade unions. Thousands of communists began to leave ADGB organisations voluntarily, directly contravening Moscow's line, and many others were expelled by the reformists. The new leftist party leadership of Ruth Fischer and Arkadi Maslow neglected trade union work, thus tacitly supporting the withdrawals, which continued unabated for most of 1924. Alarm bells began to ring in Moscow. A special trade union resolution penned by the ECCI presidium in January 1924 proclaimed allegiance to the idea of trade union unity and exhorted German communists to remain in the existing reformist unions. The appeal fell on deaf ears. Thousands still attempted to organise themselves in independent groups outside the ranks of the Free Trade Unions. Zinoviev himself was forced to concede that even members of the centrist tendency in the KPD favoured the policy of withdrawal.

Intense pressure from Lozovsky and Manuilsky was necessary before the ninth KPD congress in April 1924 adopted a compromise resolution stating that no party member could leave a trade union without the

permission of the relevant party authorities. To do so was "desertion in battle," one of the military analogies frequently used by Moscow. Again the congress ruling had little practical effect. Anti-union leaders, such as Schumacher in Berlin, were loath to disband their independent revolutionary organisations and enjoyed widespread support among the rank and file. Clearly, this represented a most serious challenge to the entire united front tactic and to the authority of the ECCI, especially as both the Fischer-Maslow leadership and the powerful ultra-leftist grouping in the KPD implicitly or explicitly condoned "the flight from the unions."

Despite a partial stabilisation in the second half of 1924, the coining of the slogan "All into the Free Trade Unions," and the party decree instructing every member to enlist in recognised unions by 1 February 1925, many communists chose to become non-unionised rather than join unions run by the detested "reformist bureaucracy." Furthermore, as a corollary of the flight from the unions, the question of fraction work took on more significance. On two occasions in late 1924 and early 1925 the KPD came in for severe criticism from Pyatnitsky for its failure to create fractions in non-communist unions. The overall result was a dramatic decline in the influence of the party in the trade union movement. At the twelfth ADGB congress in September 1925 only three out of 350 delegates were communists, a striking reduction compared to 1922.

The reluctance of the Fischer-Maslow leadership to pursue united front tactics in the trade unions contributed in no small measure to its eventual downfall in the late summer and autumn of 1925. Moscow had ominously detected strong nationalist proclivities in the KPD, which according to the ECCI were aimed at establishing the autonomy of the German party from the Comintern. The heresy had to be expunged. The man given the task of "Bolshevising" the KPD was Ernst Thälmann, a staunch pro-Muscovite and "workerist" anti-intellectual. For the next two years under his guidance the party disavowed leftist sectarianism and returned to the united front. Independent communist unions were dissolved and a part of their membership reintegrated into the Free Trade Unions.

The Thälmann leadership willingly reversed this policy in 1928-1929. Social Democrats were portrayed as the greatest enemy of the working class. A process similar to the one initiated in Czechoslovakia now took

place in Germany, and by March 1929 approximately 6,000 "rightists," many of whom were active trade unionists, had been expelled from the party. In April, Thälmann announced that the central task of the KPD was to organise separate Red unions and in November 1929 the RGO, the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition, came into existence. As in Czechoslovakia, so in Germany the proponents of the united front and of cooperation with the Social Democrats had been eliminated and the last vestiges of independent thought and action extinguished. The resistance to centralised control from Moscow, evident throughout the short history of the KPD from Paul Levi to Ruth Fischer to the rightists of 1929, had seemingly been overcome.

Relations between the Comintern and the French Communist Party (PCF) were only slightly less problematic.⁵ In the course of the 1920s several prominent figures in the PCF either resigned or were deposed or expelled for holding opinions that diverged from Moscow's, among them Ludovic Oscar Frossard, the party's first General Secretary, Boris Souvarine, an intellectual Trotskyite, and Albert Treint and Suzanne Girault, leftist leaders in the years 1923-1926.

The French trade union movement, like the Czechoslovak, was split along reformist and communist lines. In December 1921, the anarcho-syndicalist and communist opposition broke away from the reformist CGT (*Confédération Générale du Travail*) and in June 1922 formed the CGTU (*Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire*). Unlike the MVS, however, the CGTU claimed numerical supremacy over the CGT, at least until the mid 1920s. Moreover, the traditions of the French labour movement differed markedly from those of Czechoslovakia. A strong element of syndicalism pervaded the French working class, as embodied in the Charter of Amiens of 1906, which forcefully expounded the idea of union independence from all political parties. This deep-rooted mistrust of political parties and politicians hindered Moscow's attempt to forge direct links between the CGTU and the PCF in the 1920s and gave rise to accusations of "autonomism" and "federalism" on the party of both the CGTU hierarchy and membership.

Indeed, in 1922 the leaders of the CGTU, Gaston Monmousseau and Pierre Séward, appeared highly sceptical of the notion of party domination over the unions. Moscow, with Lozovsky perforce at his eloquent best, had to fight hard and long to win their allegiance to the Profintern,

even to the extent of granting concessions to appease their syndicalist leanings. At the second Profintern congress in November 1922, the clause adopted at the first congress on the "organic liaison" between the Profintern and Comintern executives was dropped on the insistence of the French delegation. The amendment was significant in that it represented the only known occasion of the central authorities yielding to pressure from national sections, although in practice the links between the two Internationals remained as firm as ever. From this time on, Monmousseau and Séward became faithful adherents of the Profintern, working successfully to bring the CGTU and its anarcho-syndicalist wing into closer contact with the PCF. In 1924 both men entered the Politburo and Séward in particular began to play a more important role in the party than in the trade unions.

It is precisely here that we see a crucial difference in the relations between the KSČ and MVS in Czechoslovakia and the PCF and CGTU in France. Although the KSČ and PCF experienced difficulties in enforcing their will on the Red Unions and the syndicalist desire for autonomy was only gradually overcome in the CGTU, the Hais leadership resisted party encroachments in union affairs much more tenaciously than the ex-syndicalists Monmousseau and Séward. The latter two, once converted to communism and elevated to the higher echelons of the PCF, scrupulously followed the party line. The opposite was true of Hais. Though a founding father of the KSČ and a member of the Politburo from 1924-1929, Hais consistently placed trade union loyalty above all else. As we shall soon see, the different attitudes of Hais and Monmousseau towards the Communist Party led them to play quite different roles in the events of 1928-1929.

Despite the fact that Monmousseau and Séward generally conformed to the dictates of the ECCI, this does not mean that the PCF and CGTU always fell placidly into line. The party and unions often reacted negatively to directives from Moscow. The PCF, together with the Italian and Spanish parties, was the most outspoken critic of the united front in 1921-1922. The new tactic caused great confusion and consternation in Paris, the party leadership insisting that it was invalid in French conditions since the PCF controlled a majority of the working class. In any case, it seemed futile to many party members to seek the cooperation of people who until recently had been branded "reformists" and "betrayers."

Similarly, French trade unionists contended that it would be counter-production to remain in CGT organisations. In addition, few CGTU executives "...believed in the possibility or even the desirability of cooperating with reformist leaders."⁶ On the contrary, most CGTU officials wished to strengthen the revolutionary unions by attracting as many workers as possible into their ranks. In short, the CGTU, like the MVS, adopted a policy of transfer. Throughout 1922 and 1923 the transfer of workers from reformist to Red unions constituted the main thrust of CGTU strategy, provoking Lozovsky's censure at the fifth Comintern congress.

The controversial and ever-present issue of fraction work also reared its ugly head. The French, like their Czechoslovak and German brethren, were painfully slow to develop fractions in non-communist unions. Pyatnitsky was not so slow to point this out at the Orgburo conference of December 1924 and again in March 1925. Suzanne Girault responded to Pyatnitsky's charges by asserting somewhat ironically that, "in order to make possible the creation of new fractions, we are now obliged to transfer comrades from the CGTU to the CGT."⁷ It is easy to understand why committed communists saw little sense in this policy and maintained that it would merely weaken the Red unions. Nevertheless, pressure from Moscow did have some effect in the mid 1920s, the PCF finally, though still half-heartedly, undertaking the task of forming fractions in CGT organisations.

Comparisons can also be drawn between France and Czechoslovakia on the question of trade union unity. It seems that the CGTU leaders were well disposed to the idea of merging with the CGT. While surely realising the futility of such manoeuvres, on three occasions in the 1920s Monmousseau proposed to the CGT the convocation of a unity congress, as demanded by the Profintern. Indeed, in April 1927 the CGTU pronounced itself "...ready to consider the re-entry *en bloc* of CGTU unions into the organisation of the CGT on the condition of recognition of equality of rights between all trade unions..." This was tantamount to proposing the liquidation of the CGTU, and as such drew sharp criticism from Togliatti, at that time a member of the ECCI presidium. He viewed the offer a perfect example of the united front from above, an approach solely to the reformist leaders, not to the mass of workers from below.⁸ In this respect the CGTU went appreciably further to the "right" than

the MVS, but in the long run the controversy was purely academic. The CGT proved as stubborn as the OSČ in refusing to sanction any kind of negotiation with the communists. Thus, Moscow's slogan of trade union unity remained as empty in France as it did in Czechoslovakia.

One may conclude from the various unity campaigns that many CGTU leaders did not wish to sever all ties with the reformists. To be sure, in 1928-1929 the CGTU was even less inclined than the PCF to heed Moscow's call for a more uncompromising stance towards the socialists. The union was bitterly divided on this issue, but the fact that Monmousseau, in stark contrast to Hais, closely identified himself with the "new line" ensured the victory of the militants at the union congress of September 1929. The CGTU did not suffer the sad fate of the MVS, maintaining unity and amicable relations with the Thorez party leadership throughout the Third Period. The union found itself, however, increasingly divorced from the mass of French workers and it was only with the advent of the Popular Front and the eventual merger with the CGT that French communists regained influence in the trade union movement.

It is clear from this brief overview of developments in Britain, Germany and France that Moscow could not automatically rely on the subservience of European parties and unions. The Comintern and Profintern and their agents abroad often faced an uphill struggle convincing recalcitrant officials to tow the line. The one article of faith that aroused the most fervent opposition was the question of remaining in and forming fractions in reformist unions. In Czechoslovakia, Germany, France and elsewhere the gut reaction of communist workers was to abandon Social Democratic organisations once parallel Red Unions had been established. This appeared to be the logical move. After all, for what purpose had the Red Unions been created, they asked, if not to concentrate all revolutionary workers in their ranks? Why bother to form fractions in reformist unions when the aim was to strengthen the Red movement? Why pay money to the "lackeys of the bourgeoisie" in the form of membership dues?

To these explanations can be added yet another. The formation and operation of fractions called for conspiratorial secrecy and clandestine activity, qualities that were largely alien to the relatively open, democratic societies of Western Europe and to the mentality of the European worker. Most communist functionaries balked at such activity, fearing, correctly, that the prerequisite organisational skills, enthusiasm and

commitment of the workers were more often than not absent. For these reasons, the creation of fractions, and hence one of the central precepts of the united front tactic, remained something of a dead letter in Europe.

The tendency to resist intervention from Moscow and, more conclusively, to pursue policies at odds with those of the Comintern reveals that the seeds of "national communism" were present in the major Communist Parties and Red Unions of Europe from their very foundation. This striving for autonomy, though often tentative and at times unsuccessful, is most significant. The international communist movement should no longer be seen as a completely monolithic, highly disciplined entity. It is clear that Moscow did not command the total respect of many parties until at least 1929. In Czechoslovakia's case, the reluctance of the KSČ and MVS in the 1920s to follow unquestioningly the Comintern line acted as a precedent for the attempts of 1945-1948 and again more dramatically in 1968 to work out a specific "Czechoslovak road to socialism." Although one should not overemphasise this line of historical continuity and cannot claim that the reform movement of the 1960s was a direct consequence of developments in the twenties, the desire for autonomism and independence from centralised control and the efforts to seek domestic solutions to domestic problems in tune with Czech democratic and pluralist traditions represent a trend in Czechoslovak labour history that has been evident throughout the existence of the KSČ. This trend has its origins in the events of the 1920s.

Table 1
Membership of the OSČ, 1897-1917

Year	Membership
1897	7,102
1898	13,787
1899	19,756
1900	22,727
1901	22,755
1902	21,022
1903	20,919
1904	21,182
1905	29,511
1906	60,971
1907	71,101
1908	65,810
1909	69,337
1910	50,102
1911	74,990
1912	107,263
1913	104,574
1914	55,178
1915	30,737
1916	23,932
1917	42,728

Sources:

- 1897-1906 J. Steiner and E. Škatula, *Deset roků odborového hnutí československého*, Prague, 1907, p. 18.
- 1907-1909 J. Steiner and O. Matoušek, *Zprávy OSČ za období od čtvrtého do pátého všeodborového sjezdu r. 1907, 1908, 1909*, Prague, 1910, p. 7.
- 1910-1917 *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu všeodborovému za léta 1910-1917*, Prague, 1918, p. 51.

Table 2

OSČ, MVS and Red Union Memberships, 1918-1929

	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923
OSČ ^a	161457	727055	822561	650601	388394	324189
OSČ ^b	—	—	—	676345	404984	322187
*Red ^{ab}	—	—	—	—	89941	168542
Unions						
MVS ^{ab}	—	—	—	—	70184	161533
MVS ^{cd}	—	—	—	—	—	152803
	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929
OSČ ^a	343733	356386	347564	340802	355024	—
OSČ ^b	343284	347452	339807	344067	376585	360797
*Red ^{ab}	210611	201035	196509	179993	165780	75946
Unions						
MVS ^{ab}	162479	188853	184025	168280	153458	—
MVS ^{cd}	161479	180207	173405	143055	132419	—

*Including independent unions

Sources:

- a. J. Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, Prague, 1930, pp. 179 and 205.
- b. *Zprávy Státního úřadu statistického*, vol. 19, Prague, 1938, p. 791.
- c. *Zpráva o činnosti MVS k III řádnému sjezdu*, Prague, 1929, p. 51.
- d. *Druhý řádný sjezd MVS*, Prague, 1926, p. 32.

Table 3

Membership of main OSČ unions, 1918-1928

	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928
Agricultural	439	179650	113677	—	38100	29240	32450	28364	24321	20708	19865
Builders	747	16190	38589	31383	1144	4379	5725	7193	6895	6550	15519
Chemical	8581	77887	84742	75978	8601	9725	11450	6794	6997	6503	6403
Metal	48130	116897	146701	123970	65154	61749	62905	64052	61073	60520	63672
Miners	26004	65197	84895	90982	65207	35524	29220	24555	22089	19042	17547
Railway	17667	55470	65598	55800	45157	38250	39143	41100	41338	42305	40885
Textile	9220	40616	64335	80600	37359	30125	32548	33819	31069	29815	30476
Wood	4429	21209	37671	28045	5039	6544	6690	7265	7065	6856	7591

Source: J. Kotecký, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, Prague, 1930, pp. 177-9.

Table 4
Membership of main MVS sections, 1922-1929

	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929 ^c
Agriculture								
a	-	52249	32919	32133	27102	23183	12639	
b	-	-	-	29133	24102	18183	7639	5232
a	45068	34207	30445	30310	27619	21531	17679	
Chemical								
b	-	-	-	30310	27619	21581	16679	13047
a	9843	27000	21638	19387	18124	16879	17893	
Metal								
b	-	-	-	16641	17577	15259	15893	7545
a	593	18023	25499	24973	22312	22510	20022	
Miners								
b	-	-	-	21973	14872	15306	17819	2406
a	-	-	-	17641	18023	17949	7296	
Railway								
b	-	-	-	17641	18023	7690	5512	7017
a	13307	19350	29275	43240	40513	33000	35910	
Textile								
b	-	-	-	43240	40513	33000	31208	16276
a	-	-	-	-	11363	13012	23115	
Builders								
b	-	-	-	-	11363	13012	20115	9204

Sources: a. J. Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, Prague, 1930, p. 205.

b. *Zpráva o činnosti MVS k III řádnému sjezdu*, Prague, 1929, p. 51.

c. *Zprávy Státního úřadu statistického*, vol. 11, Prague, 1930, p. 1280.

Table 5

Membership of independent Red Unions, 1922-1928

	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928
Builders ^{bc}	24880	17530	19306	15510	5549	—	—
Transport ^a	3072	2974	2658	2819	2700	2568	2727
Wood ^a	13021	—	9287	9363	7861	7213	7548

Sources:

a. J. Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, Prague, 1930, p. 205.

b. *Zpráva o činnosti za správní období let 1921-1924.*

Ústřední svaz stavebních dělníků, Prague, 1925, pp. 46-51.

c. *Zpráva o činnosti za správní období let 1925-1926.*

Ústřední svaz stavebních dělníků, Prague, 1927, pp. 29-31.

Table 6

Total union membership in Czechoslovakia, 1918-1929

Year	Membership
1918	371878
1919	1305904
1920	1817609
1921	1979735
1922	1712934
1923	1629939
1924	1690584
1925	1710857
1926	1671382
1927	1681054
1928	1733979
1929	1715193

Sources:

- 1918-1920 *Statistická příručka republiky československé*, vol. 3, Prague, 1928, p. 370.
- 1921-1929 *Zprávy Státního úřadu statistického*, vol. 19, Prague, 1938, p. 791.

Table 7

Regional Membership of the OSČ Union of Miners, 1918-1928 (main fields only)

	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928
Mor. Ostrava											
Czech	8054	23719	29354	34434	19990	11653	11506	10567	8871	7796	7839
Communist	—	—	—	—	8000	—	—	—	—	—	—
Polish	—	—	7471	8549	5432	3100	2762	1881	1582	1161	1206
N. Bohemia	3131	8050	8725	9245	6787	3612	3317	3248	3091	2884	2898
Kladno	10661	15871	12249	12478	7634	287	273	210	210	176	179
Plzeň-Nýřany	3366	6493	7271	6980	4158	2965	2522	2309	2267	2069	1963
Rosice	1764	4191	4523	4737	3025	2378	1303	1288	1381	1061	1166

Sources:

- 1918-1922 *Zpráva o činnosti Svazu horníků, 1921-1923*, Prague, 1924, pp. 27-8.
 1923-1926 *Zpráva o činnosti Svazu horníků, 1924-1926*, Prague, 1927, pp. 30-1.
 1927-1928 *Zpráva o činnosti Svazu horníků, 1927-1929*, Prague, 1930, pp. 52-3.

Table 8

**Regional Membership of the MVS
Miners' Section, 1923-1928**

	1923*	1924	30.6.1925	1926	1927	1928
Falknov	—	160	191	320	424	986
Kladno	—	4397	5230	2992	3000	3600
Most	—	4514	5460	4009	4123	5780
Mor.						
Ostrava	—	11193	9845	4789	4830	4870
Nýřany	—	792	803	504	514	598
Rosice	—	1983	1814	1111	1123	1298
Slovakia	2322	—	—	1042	1172	986
Žacléř	—	201	236	105	120	115

Sources:

1923-30.6.1925 *Zpráva o činnosti sekce horníků MVS, 1923-1925*
Prague, 1926, p. 18.

1926-1928 *Zpráva o činnosti sekce horníků MVS, 1926-1928*
Prague, 1929, p. 106.

* In 1923, the membership was given as 7,103 in Bohemia, 8,242 in Moravia and Silesia and 356 in Ruthenia.

APPENDIX

The MVS Executive, 1926-1929

As elected at the second MVS congress, January 1926.

Chairman:	František Halík (chemical)
1st Vice-chairman:	Alois Halman (textile)
2nd Vice-chairman:	Adolf Baier (textile)
Agricultural section:	J. Hloušek E. Jankovský B. Štýborová
Candidates:	J. Novák A. Wágner O. Moural
Miners' section:	J. Šupík F. Šimčík V. Nosek
Candidates:	S. Krč J. Svoboda J. Klíma
Metal Section:	E. Vanderer R. Beran J. Tichý

Candidates:	F. Sejpka A. Pilman L. Pezlar
Textile section:	J. Kuřfirt B. Vaňa (replaced by A. Cerná in 1927) L. Steinz
Candidates:	K. Günzl A. Černá K. Mařan
Chemical section:	F. Mareš (replaced for non-attendance) F. Černý J. Jakoubek (went to Builders' section in 1926)
Candidates:	V. Havránek (full member from 27.10.1928) J. Bambula V. Nachtman (full member from 19.9.1926)
Potters' section:	J. Mikeš
Candidate+	R. Elhenický
Glass section:	F. Zamrazil
Candidate:	L. Tříska
Leather section:	B. Kochol
Candidate:	K. Havelka
State Employees' section:	J. Kulhánek
Candidate:	F. Karel
Railway section:	F. Grünzweig B. Vobořil
Candidates:	F. Lebeda V. Sucharda

Shoeworkers section: F. Šmudla
Candidate: K. Špičák

Sources:

VOA fond Rudé odbory, kart 12, inv jedn 550, *Protokoly schůzí představenstva MVS*, 1929, pp. 64-5; *Druhý řádný sjezd MVS*, Prague, 1926, pp. 151-2.

ABBREVIATIONS

CI	The Communist International
ČS	České slovo
ČSČH	Československý časopis historický
DD	Dělnický deník
DK	Dělník
DL	Dřevodělnické listy
DNL	Dělnické listy
DVK	Dřevodělník
Inprecorr	International Press Correspondence
JF	Jednotná fronta
KM	Komunista
KR	Komunistická revue
KVK	Kovodělník
NZ	Na zdar
OAKvS	Okresní archiv na Kladně se sídlem ve Slaném
OS	Odbory a společnost
OSČ	Odborové sdružení československé (pre-1918 Odborové sdružení československé)
PkDKSČ	Príspevky k dějinám KSČ
PL	Právo lidu
RO	Rudý odborář
RP	Rudé právo
RPV	Rudé právo Večerník
SAP	Sborník archivních prací

SD	Sociální demokrat
SJ	Sjednocení
SK	Stavebník
SOAvB	Státní oblastní archiv v Brně
SÚA	Státní ústřední archiv
SV	Svoboda
VOA	Všeodborový archiv
VPL	Večerník práva lidu
ZK	Zájmy kovodělníků

NOTES

1. The term "českoslovanské" covers the Czech-speaking population of Bohemia and Moravia. It does not include Slovaks.

2. Ivan T. Berend and György Ránki, *Economic Development in East-Central Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, New York, 1974, pp. 112-18; Čestmír Ješina, "Českoslovanská sociální demokracie 1878-1914," in A. Mokřý, ed., *Osmdesát let československé sociální demokracie*, London, 1958, pp. 73-4.

3. Jacques Rupnik, "The Czech Socialists and the Nation (1848-1918)," in E. Cahm and V.C. Fišera, eds., *Socialism and Nationalism*, vol 2, Nottingham, 1979, p. 115.

4. De-Germanisation occurred most notably in Prague and Plzeň. In 1856, Prague's population was composed of 73,000 Germans and 60,000 Czechs. By 1886, there were only 30,000 Germans and 150,000 Czechs. By 1890, Plzeň was a Czech city, only one-fifth of its inhabitants being German. This phenomenon was widespread in Bohemia excepting the west and north west areas. See Arthur J. May, *The Hapsburg Monarchy, 1867-1914*, Cambridge, Mass., 1960, p. 204.

5. Rupnik, "The Czech Socialists and the Nation," pp. 115-16.

6. *Zpráva Odborového sdružení českoslovanského k VI sjezdu všeodborovému za léta 1910-1917*, Prague, 1918, p. 1.

7. Josef Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, Prague, 1930, p. 116.

8. For more details on the early history of the Czech Social Democratic Party, see Čestmír Ješina, "Českoslovanská sociální demokracie," pp. 73-85; Č. Ješina, *Czech Social Democracy: Its Origins and Nature*, Ph.D. thesis, George Washington University, 1970, pp. 142-217.

9. For more details on the early history of the Czech labour and trade union movement, see J. Steiner and E. Škatula, *Deset roků odborového hnutí československého. Zpráva sekretariátu Odborového sdružení československého k IV odborovému sjezdu*, Prague, 1907 pp. 9-11; Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, pp. 113-123; Dr. Cyril Horáček, *Počátky českého hnutí dělnického*, Prague, 1933, pp. 7-80; Vladimír Walzel, *History of Czechoslovak Trade Unionism*, Part 1., Mid-European Studies Center, New York, 1952, pp. 14-16; *Náčrt dějin československého odborového hnutí*, Bratislava, 1963, pp. 12-62; Ústřední škola ROH A. Zápotockého. Kabinet dějin odborů, *K dějinám československého odborového hnutí*, part 1, Prague, 1980, pp. 16-48; *Prehled dějin československého odborového hnutí*, Prague, 1984, pp. 27-45; J. Polach, "The Beginnings of Trade Unionism among the Slavs of the Austrian Empire," in the *American Slavic and East European Review*, vol. 14, 1955, pp. 239-48.

10. Steiner and Škatula, *Deset roků*, p. 11.

11. Steiner and Škatula, *Deset roků*, p. 12.

12. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 1.

13. For political developments in the 1890's, see Bruce M. Garver, *The Young Czech Party 1874-1901 and the Emergence of a Multi-Party System*, New Haven, 1978, pp. 217-31; Stanley B. Winters, "Kramář, Kaizl, and the Hegemony of the Young Czech Party, 1891-1901," in Peter Brock and H. Gordon Skilling, eds., *The Czech Renaissance of the Nineteenth Century*, Toronto, 1970, pp. 282-314.

14. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 1.

15. PL, 5.1.1897.

16. Polach, "The Beginnings of Trade Unionism," p. 244.

17. PL, 5.1.1897.

18. Steiner and Škatula, *Deset roků*, p. 13.

19. Polach, "The Beginnings of Trade Unionism," pp. 245-6.

20. Steiner and Škatula, *Deset roků*, p. 12.

21. Steiner and Škatula, *Deset roků*, p. 13.

22. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 1.

23. *Protokol VII řádného odborového sjezdu. Zpráva Říšské komise odborových organizací v Rakousku k VII sjezdu*, Vienna, 1913, p. 47.

24. *Prehled dějin*, pp. 72-3.

25. Steiner and Škatula, *Deset roků*, p. 13; Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, p. 137; *Prehled dějin*, p. 73.

26. According to union membership figures, the combined total for Moravia and Silesia in 1906 was only 849, see Steiner and Škatula, *Deset roků*, p. 30; Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, pp. 139 and 141; E. Beneš, *Dělnické hnutí v Rakousku a v Čechách*, Brandýs, 1911, p. 187.

27. Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, pp. 138-9; *Přehled dějin*, p. 73.

28. Steiner and Škatula, *Deset roků*, p. 96.

29. Steiner and Škatula, *Deset roků*, p. 96.

30. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 5.

31. Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, p. 139.

32. See for instance Šafránek's article in KVK, vol 2, no 51, 19.12. 1901.

33. Steiner and Škatula, *Deset roků*, p. 96.

34. *Zpráva komise odborových organizací*, p. 48.

35. Steiner and Škatula, *Deset roků*, p. 97.

36. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 3.

37. Steiner and Škatula, *Deset roků*, p. 18.

38. The passage on developments in the years 1902-1906 is based on Steiner and Škatula, *Deset roků*, pp. 97-8 and 101-110; see also Beneš, *Dělnické hnutí*, pp. 181-7; for the Austrian viewpoint, see *Zpráva komise odborových organizací*, pp. 47-57.

39. Trevor Vaughan Thomas, "Bohumil (sic) Šmeral and the Czech Question 1904-14," in *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol 11, no 2-3, July, 1976, pp. 79-92; Rupnik, "The Czech Socialists and the Nation," pp. 126-8.

40. Beneš, *Dělnické hnutí*, p. 188.

41. *Zpráva komise odborových organizací*, p. 30.

42. J. Steiner and O. Matoušek, *Zprávy Odborového sdružení československého za období od čtvrtého do pátého všeodborového sjezdu r. 1907, 1908, 1909*, Prague, 1910, p. 7.

43. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 3.

44. Beneš, *Dělnické hnutí*, p. 187.

45. For the opinions of the Moravian centralists, see *Proti rušitelům mezinárodnosti a jednotnosti odborového boje!*, Vienna, 1910.

46. Beneš, *Dělnické hnutí*, pp. 188-91; Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, pp. 145-6.

47. Polach, "The Beginnings of Trade Unionism," p. 246.

48. Beneš, *Dělnické hnutí*, p. 190.
49. Beneš, *Dělnické hnutí*, pp. 191-2.
50. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, pp. 15-17.
51. Beneš, *Dělnické hnutí*, p. 193; *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 18.
52. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 3.
53. Steiner and Matoušek, *Zprávy OSČ*, p. 7; *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 5.
54. Steiner and Škatula, *Deset roků*, p. 17.
55. Steiner and Škatula, *Deset roků*, pp. 17-18.
56. Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, p. 139.
57. OSČ, vol 1, no 1, 22.4.1897, pp. 3-8.
58. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 5; Steiner and Matoušek, *Zprávy OSČ*, p. 7; Steiner and Škatula, *Deset roků*, p. 18.
59. Steiner and Matoušek, *Zprávy OSČ*, pp. 10 and 34.
60. *Zpráva komise odborových organizací*, pp. 37-8.
61. Beneš, *Dělnické hnutí*, p. 187; Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, p. 141.
62. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, pp. 6-7.
63. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 3.
64. OSČ, vol 1, 22.4.1897, pp. 6-8.
65. Steiner and Matoušek, *Zprávy OSČ*, pp. 15-19.
66. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 54.
67. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 40.
68. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 46.
69. Thomas, "Bohumil Šmeral," pp. 83-4.
70. Rupnik, "The Czech Socialists and the Nation," p. 127.
71. Istvan Deák, "Shades of 1848: War, Revolution and Nationality Conflict in Austria-Hungary, 1914-1920," in Charles L. Bertrand, ed., *Revolutionary Situations in Europe, 1917-1922: Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary*, Montreal, 1977, p. 87.
72. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 8.
73. Zora P. Pryor, "Czechoslovak Economic Development in the Interwar Period," in Victor S. Mamatey and Radomír Luža, eds., *A History of the Czechoslovak Republic, 1918-1948*, Princeton, 1973, p. 194.
74. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 44.
75. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, pp. 42-5; *Protokol VI všeodborového sjezdu Odborového sdružení československého*, Prague, 1919, pp. 69-70 and 72-3; Deak, "Shades of 1848," pp. 88-9.

76. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, pp. 8-9.
77. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 5.
78. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, pp. 9-10.
79. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 11.
80. *Protokol VI sjezdu*, p. 16.
81. Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, p. 152; *Přehled dějin*, pp. 108-9.
82. *Protokol VI sjezdu*, pp. 27-31.
83. Gerald D. Feldman, "Socio-economic Structures in the Industrial Sector and Revolutionary Potentialities, 1917-22," in Bertrand, ed., *Revolutionary Situations*, p. 161.
84. *Protokol VI sjezdu*, pp. 32-6.
85. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 48.
86. *Protokol VI sjezdu*, p. 37.
87. *Protokol VI sjezdu*, p. 10.
88. For more details on workers' councils in Bohemia and Moravia, see Zdeněk Kárník, *Za československou republiku rad. Národní výbory a dělnické rady v českých zemích 1917-1920*, Prague, 1963.
89. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 5; *Protokol VI sjezdu*, p. 10.
90. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 51.
91. *Protokol VI sjezdu*, pp. 10 and 40.
92. DL, vol 8, no 9, 8.5.1918 and vol 8, no 16, 14.8.1918; see also NZ, vol 24, no 1, 2.1.1918.
93. *Protokol VI sjezdu*, pp. 86-93.
94. Věra Olivová, *The Doomed Democracy. Czechoslovakia in a Disrupted Europe, 1914-1938*, London, 1972, p. 50.
95. Olivová, *The Doomed Democracy*, p. 54.
96. OSČ, vol 22, no 21, 1918, pp. 245-8.
97. *Zpráva OSČ k VI sjezdu*, p. 51.
98. *Protokol VI sjezdu*, p. 41.
99. *Protokol VI sjezdu*, pp. 6 and 8.
100. *Protokol VI sjezdu*, p. 75.
101. *Protokol VI sjezdu*, p. 42.
102. *Ročenka Národního shromáždění republiky Československé, 1919-1920*, Prague, 1920, pp. 71-4; *Zpráva k XIII řádnému sjezdu Československé sociálně demokratické strany dělnické*, Prague, n.d., p. 82.

Chapter Two

1. Ferdinand Peroutka, *Budování státu 3: Postavení Československé sociální demokracie v budování státu*, Perth Amboy, New Jersey, 1981, pp.74-6.
2. František Němec, *Social Security in Czechoslovakia*, London, 1943, p. 7.
3. Václav L. Beneš, "Czechoslovak Democracy and its Problems, 1918-1920," in Mamatey and Luža, eds., p. 53; Peroutka, *Budování státu 3: Postavení Československé sociální demokracie*, p. 73.
4. Pryor, "Czechoslovak Economic Development," p. 192-4.
5. *Zpráva Odborového sdružení československého k VII sjezdu všeodborovému za léta 1918-1920*, Prague, 1922, p. 10.
6. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, p. 8.
7. Beneš, "Czechoslovak Democracy and its Problems," p. 59-60; Pryor, "Czechoslovak Economic Development," p. 195.
8. Pryor, "Czechoslovak Economic Development," p. 193.
9. Ferdinand Peroutka, *Budování státu*, vol 1, Prague, 1933, p. 241.
10. Peroutka, *Budování státu*, vol 1, p. 242.
11. Alois Kocman, ed., *Boj o směr vývoje československého státu*, vol 1, Prague, 1965, p. 262.
12. Kocman, *Boj o směr*, p. 269.
13. Peroutka, *Budování státu 3: Postavení Československé sociální demokracie*, p. 75.
14. Peroutka, *Budování státu 3: Postavení Československé sociální demokracie*, p. 80; *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, p. 13.
15. Peroutka, *Budování státu*, vol 1, p. 335.
16. Parties were represented in the provisional National Assembly on the basis of their showing in the Reichsrat elections of 1911. The Agrarian party had the largest parliamentary club with 55 members, followed by the Social Democrats with 53, the National Democrats with 46, the Czech Socialists with 29, the Czechoslovak Populist party with 24 and the Czech Progressive party with 6. The Slovak club had 53 members. For more details see Beneš, "Czechoslovak Democracy and its Problems," pp. 54-5.
17. Jaroslav Janko, "Unemployment in Czechoslovakia," in Social Institute of the Czechoslovak Republic, *Social Policy in the Czechoslovak Republic*, Prague, 1924, pp. 103-5; *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, p. 27.

18. Janko, "Unemployment in Czechoslovakia," pp. 113-18; Čestmír Ješina, "Social Progress in Czechoslovakia 1918-1938," in Miloslav Rechcigl Jr., ed., *Czechoslovakia: Past and Present*, vol 1, The Hague and Paris, 1968, pp. 193-4.

19. Ješina, "Social Progress in Czechoslovakia," p. 194; Edgar P. Young, *Czechoslovakia: Keystone of Peace and Democracy*, London, 1938, pp. 141-2.

20. Peroutka, *Budování státu*, vol 1, p. 415.

21. Ješina, "Social Progress in Czechoslovakia," p. 194.

22. Young, *Czechoslovakia*, pp. 145-6.

23. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, p. 26.

24. Ješina, "Social Progress in Czechoslovakia," p. 195.

25. Ješina, "Social Progress in Czechoslovakia," pp. 198-9.

26. Young, *Czechoslovakia*, p. 137.

27. Ješina, "Social Progress in Czechoslovakia," pp. 199-200; for more details on land reform see Elizabeth Textor, *Land Reform in Czechoslovakia*, London, 1923 and Ladislav K. Feierabend, "Agriculture in the First Republic of Czechoslovakia," in Rechcigl, ed., *Czechoslovakia: Past and Present*, vol 1, pp. 170-82.

28. J. Beránek, "Industrial Councils and Committees," in Social Institute of the ČSR, *Social Policy*, p. 77.

29. *Sbírka zákonů a nařízení republiky Československé*, Prague, 1920, pp. 329 and 331; see also Vladimír Dubský, *Závodní výbory a rady v předmnichovském Československu*, Prague, 1984, pp. 39-41.

30. Beránek, "Industrial Councils and Committees," p. 81.

31. Dubský, *Závodní výbory a rady*, p. 41.

32. Beránek, "Industrial Councils and Committees," p. 79.

33. Beránek, "Industrial Councils and Committees," pp. 85-6.

34. *Sbírka zákonů a nařízení republiky Československé*, Prague, 1921, pp. 1329-30.

35. *VII sjezd Odborového sdružení československého. Zápis o jeho jednání ve dnech 22-26 ledna 1922 v Obecním domě hlavního města Prahy*, Prague 1922, pp. 103-4.

36. Peroutka, *Budování státu*, vol 4, Prague, 1936, p. 2336.

37. Victor S. Mamatey, "The Development of Czechoslovak Democracy, 1920-1938," in Mamatey and Luža, eds., p. 107.

38. *VII sjezd OSČ*, p. 103.

39. Quoted from Tayerle's speech in *VII sjezd OSČ*, p. 98.
40. The term was used by Tayerle at a meeting in Olomouc in September 1923. See VOA fond OSČ 6260/438, *Zápisy o poradách a schůzích tajemníků OSČ*.
41. Kocman, *Boj o směr*, pp. 239-40.
42. *VII sjezd OSČ*, pp. 20-1 and 102; *Zásady a cíle marxistické levice Československé sociálně demokratické strany dělnické*, Prague, 1920, p. 6.
43. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, pp. 10 and 13.
44. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, p. 15.
45. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, p. 18.
46. *Zpráva za rok 1919-1920 ku V svazovému sjezdu horníků*, Most, 1921, pp. 23-4.
47. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, p. 13.
48. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, pp. 9-13.
49. Pryor, "Czechoslovak Economic Development," p. 196.
50. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, pp. 6-8; Social Institute of the ČSR, *Social Policy*, Addendum.
51. Peroutka, *Budování státu*, vol 1, p. 335.
52. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, pp. 28-30.
53. Peroutka, *Budování státu*, vol 4, p. 2342.
54. For a discussion on the problem of socialisation see, Peroutka, *Budování státu*, vol 4, pp. 2340-50.
55. T.G. Masaryk, *Cesta demokracie: Soubor projevů za republiky, svazek druhý, 1921-1923*, Prague, 1934, p. 20.
56. Victor S. Mamatey, "The Establishment of the Republic," in Mamatey and Luža, eds., pp. 36-7.
57. Martin R. Myant, *Socialism and Democracy in Czechoslovakia, 1945-1948*, Cambridge, 1981, pp. 8-9.
58. For details on the origins of the Communist Party, see H Gordon Skilling, "The Formation of a Communist Party in Czechoslovakia," in *American Slavic and East European Review*, vol 14, no 3, 1955, pp. 346-58; Paul E. Zinner, *Communist Strategy and Tactics in Czechoslovakia, 1918-1948*, New York, 1963, pp. 25-35; F.B.M. Fowkes, "The Origins of Czechoslovak Communism," in *European Studies Review*, vol 1, no 3, 1971, pp. 249-74; Zdeněk L. Suda, *Zealots and Rebels. A History of The Ruling Communist Party of Czechoslovakia*, Stanford, 1980, pp. 1-49;

Jacques Rupnik, *Histoire du Parti communiste tchécoslovaque. Des origines à la prise du pouvoir*, Paris, 1981, pp. 41-54; particularly relevant is Bernard Wheaton, *Radical Socialism in Czechoslovakia: Bohumír Smeral, the Czech Road to Socialism and the Origins of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, 1917-1921*, Boulder/New York, 1986.

59. On the desire for unity, see the speeches by delegates to the sixth OSČ congress, *Protokol VI sjezdu*, pp. 58-60.

60. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, pp. 66-7.

61. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, p. 50; Vladimír Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí v Československu na počátku dvacátých let*, Prague, 1966, p. 21; for details of the discussions, see OSČ, vol 22, no 22-3, 1918, pp. 261-2.

62. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, pp. 51-3; Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 21.

63. VOA fond OSČ 6255/437, *Zápisy o plenárních schůzích OSČ 1919*, March-April report.

64. Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, pp. 174-5.

65. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, p. 61.

66. For details on the attempts to found a "German-Austria," see Mamatey, "The Establishment of the Republic," in Mamatey and Luža, eds., p. 27; Olivová, *The Doomed Democracy*, p. 94.

67. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, pp. 61-5; Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, pp. 22-3.

68. Vladimír Dubský, "Hlavní tendence odborové politiky a vývoj OSČ v letech 1918-1922," in *Sborník vznik Československé republiky a odborové hnutí*, Prague, 1968, p. 61.

69. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, p. 63. The IFTU has been founded in 1913 under the leadership of Karl Legien, the General Secretary of the German Social Democratic trade union body. Like the Second International, it too folded during World War I. In February 1919 an international conference of trade unionists held in Berne decided to renew the pre-war organisation. To this end a congress was called to create a new International Federation of Trade Unions. The meeting took place in Amsterdam in July 1919, and hence the organisation became known as the "Amsterdam International." It claimed to represent 17,740,000 workers in thirteen European countries and in the American Federation of Labor. Among the leading figures in the IFTU were W. A. Appleton, Léon Jouhaux, C. Mertens, Edo Fimmen and Jan Oudegeest. For details

on the IFTU, see Julius Braunthal, *History of the International, 1914-1943*, vol 2, New York, 1967, pp. 173-4; and Lewis L. Lorwin, *Labor and Internationalism*, New York, 1929, pp. 100-14 and 174-96.

70. Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, pp. 199, 208, 213 and 215.

71. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, p. 75. Three different figures exist for OSČ membership in 1921. The figure was 650,601 according to Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, p. 179; 675,625 according to *Zprávy Státního úřadu statistického*, vol 4, Prague, 1923, p. 230; and 676, 345 according to the same source, vol 18, 1937, p. 1015. Membership figures can differ radically from source to source.

72. Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, pp. 177-83.

73. Albin Oberschall, *Odborové organizace zaměstnanecké v republice Československé. Statistické studie za léta 1913-1922*, Prague, 1924, p. 64; Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, 190-1. ČOD membership was 265, 979 in 1919 and 348,349 in 1920 according to Kotek, pp. 188 and 192.

74. Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, pp. 220-1; Dubský, *KSC a odborové hnutí*, p. 25.

75. Vladimír Dubský, "Tradice bojů za jednotu československých odborů a vznik ROH," *Acta Universitatis Carolinae*, Prague, 1975, p. 37.

76. Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, p. 172.

77. OSČ, vol 26, no 16, 1922, p. 221.

78. *Zpráva ku XV řádnému sjezdu Československé sociálně demokratické strany dělnické*, Prague, 1927, p. 363; *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, p. 18.

79. See above, pp. 24-6.

80. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápis o plenárních schůzích*, 11.7.1919.

81. For details of the May 1920 programme see above, p. 33.

82. See speeches by the leftists Junek, Havelka, Galla, Handlř, Starý, Pergl, Kapoun and Šrámek in *VII sjezd OSČ*, pp. 19, 21-2, 24, 26, 38 and 69-71.

83. For a full list of Social Democratic parliamentary deputies see *Ročenka Národního shromáždění republiky Československé*, pp. 71-4.

84. For more details on workers' councils see *Rady dělnických, vojenských a zemědělských zástupců: Dělnické rady*, Kladno, 1920, pp. 3-9; Petr Lesjuk, Irena Malá and Jiří Života, "Z činnosti dělnických

rad v období bojů o charakter republiky. (Výběr dokumentů z let 1919-1920),” in SAP, vol 10, no 1, 1960, pp. 3-109. Prague, Brno and Oslavany were other areas affected.

85. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápis o plenárních schůzích*, 13.6.1919.
86. Dubský, “Hlavní tendence odborové politiky,” p. 68.
87. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 28.
88. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 30.
89. SD, vol 2, no 1, 7.1.1920 and no 8, 26.2.1920.
90. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o poradách tajemníků*, 11.5.1920.
91. OSČ, vol 24, no 19, 1920, p. 257.
92. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, p. 77.
93. VPL, 20.10.1920; DK, vol 24, no 22, 30.10.1920.
94. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 42.
95. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, pp. 79-83.
96. DK, vol 25, no 1, 8.1.1921.
97. SD, vol 3, no 1, 7.1.1921.
98. KM, vol 1, no 1, 29.4.1921. Anticipating the formation of a Communist Party, the title of *Sociální demokrat* was changed to *Komunista* in April 1921.
99. OSČ, vol 24, no 20, 1920, p. 274.
100. Dubský *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 67; for more details on the centrists see Jana Možná, “Vývoj centrismu v českém dělnickém hnutí na počátku 20 let,” in PkDKSČ, vol 7, no 5, 1967, pp. 725-743.
101. SD, vol 3, no 10, 11.3.1921; RP, 8.3.1921. The term “social patriot opportunist” was a communist expression describing the nationalist and reformist stance of Social Democratic Party and trade union leaders.
102. RP, 9.3.1921; Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 77.
103. DK, vol 25, no 3, 11.2.1921 and no 6, 26.3.1921.
104. For Piták’s speech critical of Soviet Russia see, *Protokol XIII řádného sjezdu Československé sociálně demokratické strany dělnické*, Prague, 1921, pp. 178-82.
105. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 77.
106. VOA fond OSČ 6257/438, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva OSČ*, 11.2.1921.
107. PL, 27.3.1921.
108. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, p. 88; see also OSČ, vol 25, no 7, 1921, p. 90.

109. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, p. 89.
 110. OSČ, vol 25, no 7, 1921, p. 90.
 111. RP, 1.5.1921.
 112. *Protokol Ustavujícího sjezdu KSČ*, Prague, 1921, p. 125.
 113. Points nine and ten of the Comintern's 21 Conditions on Entry stated:
 “ 9. Every party that wishes to belong to the Communist International must systematically and persistently develop Communist activities within the trade unions, workers' and works councils. . . . Within these organisations it is necessary to organise Communist cells the aim of which is to win the trade unions etc. for the cause of Communism by incessant and persistent work. In their daily work the cells have the obligation to expose everywhere the treachery of the social patriots and and vacillations of the 'centrists.' The Communist cells must be completely subordinated to the Party as a whole.
 10. Every party belonging to the Communist International has the obligation to wage a stubborn struggle against the Amsterdam 'International' of scab trade union organisations. It must expound as forcefully as possible among trade unionists the idea of the necessity of the break with the scab Amsterdam International. It must support the International Association of Red Trade Unions, affiliated to the Communist International, at present in the process of formation, with every means at its disposal.”
- Cited from Alan Adler, ed., *Theses, Resolutions, and Manifestoes of the First Four Congresses of the Third International*, London, 1980, p. 95.
114. Choráz's article was published in RP, 12, 16. and 17.6.1921.
 115. Karel Votava, *Epištola k odborově organisovaným dělníkům*, Prague, 1921, pp. 5-6, 13-14, 27, 30 and 41.
 116. RP, 6.4.1921.
 117. RP, 24.5.1921.
 118. OSČ, vol 25, no 18, 1921, pp. 270-1.
 119. RP, 21.4.1921.
 120. RP, 25.12.1921.
 121. Vladimír Dubský, *Pražská stranická organizace v letech 1921-1929*, Prague, 1980, p. 8.

122. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 12.5.1921 and the report for July, 14.7.1921.

123. Jane Degras, ed., *The Communist International 1919-1943. Documents*, vol 1, London, 1956, pp. 90 and 145-7.

124. RP, 26.2.1921.

125. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 80.

126. RP, 6. and 9.7.1921; DK, vol 25, no 16, 27.8.1921.

127. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, pp. 83-5.

128. VOA fond Rudé odbory, kart 1, inv jedn 1, *These Komunistické internacionály o Rudé internacionále odborových svazů*.

129. *Resolutions and Decisions adopted by the First International Congress of the R.I.L.U., 3-19 July 1921*, Glasgow, 1922, p. 82.

130. See the sharply anti-communist tone of *Zpráva o činnosti Svazu kovodělníků v Československé republice za období 1919-1922*, Prague, 1923, pp. 35-41.

131. RP, 6.3.1921.

132. RP, 24.8.1921.

133. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, pp. 87-8.

134. RP, 20.8.1921.

135. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 13.10.1921.

136. SK, vol 32, no 19, 21.9.1921.

137. For the congress debate on the Moscow International see, *Stenografický protokol o jednání II sjezdu Ústředního svazu stavebních dělníků v Československé republice*, Prague, 1921, pp. 249-60; RP, 9.9. 1921.

138. RPV, 19.9.1921.

139. SJ, vol 3, no 20, 22.9.1921.

140. SJ, vol 3, no 17, 1.9.1921.

141. SJ, vol 3, no 7, 30.6.1921 and no 23, 13.10.1921.

142. OSČ, vol 25, no 7, 1921, p. 90.

143. OSČ, vol 25, no 18, 1921, p. 272.

144. RP, 11.9.1921.

145. RPV, 13.10.1921.

146. RP, 18.10.1921.

147. RP, 11.9.1921.

148. Karl Kreibich, "Trade Unions and Communism," in *The Communist Review*, October, 1922, p. 307.

149. RP, 13.12.1921.

150. RP, 29.12.1921.
151. Václav Jiša, "Formování revoluční odborové politiky," in *O revoluční odborovou politiku*, Prague, 1975, p. 42; Modráček left the SDP in 1919 and formed an independent socialist party whose organ was *Socialistické listy* from which this article is said to come. He has subsequently been branded as a "propagator of Bernstein revisionism in the Czech Social Democratic movement" and a "supporter of Czech bourgeois nationalism...who propagated so-called cooperative socialism." See Václav Kopecký, *ČSR a KSČ. Pamětní výpisy k historii Československé republiky a k boji SDC za socialistické Československo*, Prague, 1960, p. 106.
152. SJ, vol 4, no 2, 12.1.1922.
153. PL, 12.1.1922.
154. PL, 19.1.1922.
155. PL, 25.12.1921.
156. PL, 22.1.1922.
157. SJ, vol 3, no 34, 29.12.1921.
158. PL, 24.12.1921.
159. RP, 20.11.1921.
160. RP, 22 and 25.12.1921.
161. The Narrow Executive was the equivalent of the Politburo and the Broad Executive was the Central Committee.
162. Miroslav Klír, ed., *Studijní materiály k dějinám KSČ v letech 1921-1924*, Prague, 1959, p. 102.
163. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, November, 1921 report. It was claimed that the Union had not paid "a single halér."
164. PL, 22.1.1922.
165. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, November, 1921 report. The vote was seventeen to six in favour of banning the union from the congress.
166. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, pp. 94-5.
167. RP, 8.1.1922.
168. *Inprecorr*, vol 2, no 6, January, 1922, pp. 46-7.
169. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, p. 20.
170. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 14.1. and 12.5.1921.
171. SK, vol 32, no 15, 27.7.1921.
172. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, pp. 83-4; VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 14.1.1921.

173. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, pp. 83 and 86.
174. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, April, 1921.
175. DNL, 23.12.1920.
176. *Zpráva OSČ k VII sjezdu*, pp. 82-3.
177. RPV, 5.2.1921.
178. RP, 3.3.1921.
179. *Zpráva o činnosti Mezinárodního všeodborového svazu v Československé republice za správní období 1923-1924*, Prague, 1926, p. 86.
180. DK, vol 25, no 15, 13.8.1921 and no 16, 27.8.1921; Dubský, *Pražská stranická organizace*, p. 10; the law has been described as a warning to "...communists and other political groups with a penchant for violence...which provided stiff penalties against the use of force as a method of political action." See Mamatey, "The Development of Czechoslovak Democracy," pp. 106-7.
181. SJ, vol 3, no 28, 28.11.1921.
182. DK, vol 25, no 16, 27.8.1921.
183. DK, vol 25, no 18, 24.9.1921.
184. RP, 1.5.1921.
185. RP, 20.3.1921.
186. Karel Tetenka was vice-chairman of the Union of Builders in 1917 and 1918. See, SK, vol 29, no 15, 17.7.1918; Josef Teska was chairman of the Union of Woodworkers and editor-in-chief of its organ. See DL, vol 8, no 6, 27.3.1918; Josef Hais was editor of the chemical workers' journal, *Lučebník*. See *Protokol VI sjezdu*, p. 121.
187. Jaroslav Handlř, however, was apparently "well-known" among Prague joiners by the summer of 1918. See, DL, vol 8, no 16, 14.8.1918.
188. The majority of chemical workers joined the communist MVS in October, 1922. Only 8,601 out of a 1921 membership of 75,978 remained in the OSČ. See Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, pp. 177 and 205.
189. VOA fond OSČ 6331/442, *Zpráva krajského všeodborového sekretariátu v Pardubicích o činnosti v roce 1922*.
190. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o poradách tajemníků*, 11.5.1920.
191. Zinner, *Communist Strategy and Tactics in Czechoslovakia*, pp. 62-3; see also, *Vítkovice: Železářny a strojířny Klementa Gottwalda*, Prague, 1978, p. 52.
192. See the memoirs of Jaroslav Heřman in *Rudí odboráři vzpomínají*, Prague, 1961, p. 108.

193. The communist, Alois Muna, delivered many lectures and public talks in the Kladno region on his return from Soviet Russia in late 1918, and the leading leftist, Antonín Zápotocký, was an activist in the local SDP organisation.

194. Josef Jonáš, "Za revoluční linii," in *Za revoluční odbory: Vzpomínky rudých odborářů na léta dvacátá*, Prague, 1962, p. 96.

195. Edmund Hünigen, "Za revoluční odbory," in *Za revoluční odbory*, pp. 139-40. The pamphlet "*Moscow or Amsterdam?*" was written by Alexander Lozovsky, the General Secretary of the Profintern.

196. OAKvS, Okresní správa politická, č 125/1922 pres.

Chapter Three

1. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 99.

2. VOA fond Rudé odbory, kart 11, inv jedn 533, *Třídni boj aneb třídní dorozumění?*

3. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 102; Jonáš, "Za revoluční linii," p. 109. "Jansen" was the pseudonym used by the Dutchman, Johannes Proost.

4. *VII sjezd OSČ*, pp. 4-5.

5. *VII sjezd OSČ*, pp. 18-19; Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 103.

6. *VII sjezd OSČ*, p. 21.

7. *VI sjezd OSČ*, p. 24.

8. *VII sjezd OSČ*, p. 26.

9. *VII sjezd OSČ*, pp. 66-8.

10. *VII sjezd OSČ*, p. 50.

11. *VII sjezd OSČ*, p. 27.

12. *VII sjezd OSČ*, p. 67.

13. *VII sjezd OSČ*, pp. 46 and 69-71.

14. *VII sjezd OSČ*, p. 51.

15. *VII sjezd OSČ*, pp. 25-6.

16. *VII sjezd OSČ*, p. 50.

17. *VII sjezd OSČ*, p. 99.

18. *VII sjezd OSČ*, pp. 105-6.

19. KM, vol 4, no 4, 27.1.1922.

20. DK, vol 26, no 2, 28.1.1922.

21. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 10.
22. PL, 26.1.1922.
23. SJ, vol 4, no 4, 2.2.1922.
24. SJ, vol 4, no 7, 23.2.1922.
25. For a radical leftist stance see, KM, vol 4, no 16, 21.4.1922.
26. KM, vol 4, no 21, 26.5.1922. It is possible to equate the ultra-leftists in the KSČ (Jílek, Bolen, Houser, Šturc and others) with those in the French, Italian, and Spanish Communist Parties who rejected the united front tactic.
27. RP, 4.2.1922 and PL, 4.2.1922 agreed on this figure.
28. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 9.2.1922 and 9.3.1922.
29. OAKvS, OSP č 125/1922 pres.
30. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, pp. 111-13.
31. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 9.3.1922.
32. SJ, vol 4, no 5, 9.2.1922.
33. SJ, vol 4, no 6, 16.2.1922.
34. SJ, vol 4, no 7, 23.2.1922.
35. SJ, vol 4, no 10, 16.3.1922.
36. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 15.4.1922.
37. KM, vol 4, no 11, 17.3.1922.
38. Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 1, p. 320. (My emphasis).
39. Albert Resis, *The Profintern: Origins to 1923*, Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1964, p. 335.
40. RP, 29.3.1922.
41. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 11.5.1922.
42. VOA fond Rudé odbory, kart 9, inv jedn 390, *Rezoluce o činnosti a taktice komunistů v odborovém hnutí*; RP, 20.4.1922.
43. KM, vol 4, no 16, 21.4.1922.
44. *Zpráva Svazu kovodělníků 1919-1922*, pp. 43-5.
45. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 121.
46. KM, vol 4, no 20, 19.5.1922.
47. RP, 20.5.1922 and 23.5.1922; RPV, 31.5.1922; See also, *Zpráva Svazu kovodělníků 1919-1922*, p. 47.
48. *Zpráva Svazu kovodělníků 1919-1922*, p. 45.
49. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 105; Pavel Reiman, et al., *Dějiny KSČ*, Prague, 1961, p. 188.

50. ZK, vol 14, no 22, 31.5.1922 asked, "is it possible to believe the reports in *Rudé právo*?"
51. ZK, vol 14, no 24, 14.6.1922.
52. *Zpráva Svazu kovodělníků 1919-1922*, p. 47.
53. Hampl was accused of financial malpractice in SV, 20.4.1922.
54. ZK, vol 14, no 24, 14.6.1922.
55. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 126.
56. RP, 13.6.1922; *Zpráva Svazu kovodělníků 1919-1922*, p. 48.
57. ZK, vol 14, no 24, 14.6.1922.
58. *Zpráva Svazu kovodělníků 1919-1922*, p. 49.
59. Of the 123,970 members in 1921, a mere 9,843 joined the MVS at the end of 1922. See, Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, pp. 177 and 205.
60. *Zpráva Svazu kovodělníků 1919-1922*, pp. 39-41 and 63.
61. This scenario was discussed briefly in PL, 5.7.1922.
62. *Zpráva o činnosti Svazu kovodělníků v Československé republice za období 1922-1925*, Prague, 1925, pp. 46-7 and 65.
63. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o poradách tajemníků*, 13.6.1922.
64. SJ, vol 4, no 18, 25.6.1922.
65. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o poradách tajemníků*, 13.6.1922.
66. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 8.6.1922.
67. DL, vol 32, no 12, 13.6.1922.
68. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 8.6.1922.
69. SJ, vol 4, no 18, 25.6.1922.
70. The leader of the Moravian woodworkers was unable to persuade Tayerle to change his decision on the expulsion. See, Rudolf Merta, *Pamětní spis 1889-1929. Čtyřicet let organizace dřevodělníků na Moravě*, Brno, 1930, p. 74.
71. DL, vol 32, no 12, 13.6.1922.
72. OSČ, vol 26, no 13, 1.7.1922, p. 185.
73. Supplement to DL, vol 32, no 14, 11.7.1922. The distinction was not entirely academic as developments in the mid 1920s would show.
74. SJ, vol 4, no 20, 25.7.1922.
75. DVK, vol 32, no 1, 14.6.1922; PL, 10.6.1922.
76. DL, vol 32, no 12, 13.6.1922; DVK, vol 32, no 1, 14.6.1922 claimed that thirty-three delegates opposed Handlíř, whilst Dubský says that the voting was 93 to 24. See, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 124.

77. SJ, vol 4, no 18, 25.6.1922.
78. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 8.6.1922.
79. *Zpráva Odborového sdružení československého k VIII sjezdu všeodborovému za léta 1921 až 1925*, Prague, 1926, p. 192; SJ, vol 4, no 18, 25.6.1922 said the vote had been 30 to five.
80. PL, 17 and 18.5.1922; the 1920 figure was given as only 33,671 by Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, p. 177.
81. Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, pp. 177 and 205.
82. PL, 5.5.1922.
83. PL, 30.5.1922.
84. PL, 4.6.1922.
85. *Zpráva o činnosti sekce lučebníků MVS v Československé republice za období od 1.1.1922 do 31.12.1924*, Prague, 1926, p. 8.
86. Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, pp. 177 and 205.
87. VPL, 31.5.1922.
88. SK, vol 33, no 12, 14.6.1922.
89. PL, 1.10.1922.
90. Lewis L. Lorwin, *Labor and Internationalism*, New York, 1929, pp. 231-2.
91. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 174. Two other precedents had been set. Firstly, in the spring of 1921 several thousand leftists had been expelled from the German Social Democratic Union of Textile workers, including the entire local branch in Cvikov. For details see, Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, pp. 63-6. Secondly, the French socialist trade union, the CGT, had been split in December, 1921, and an independent communist union organisation, the CGTU, had been formed. For more details see, V.R. Lorwin, *The French Labor Movement*, Cambridge, Mass., 1966, pp. 55-8 and Robert Wohl, *French Communism in the Making, 1914-1924*, Stanford, 1966, pp. 236-42 and 279-84.
92. DL, vol 32, no 12, 13.6.1922 and no 14, 11.7.1922.
93. DL, vol 32, no 12, 13.6.1922 and no 14, 11.7.1922.
94. DL, vol 32, no 12, 13.6.1922 and no 18, 5.9.1922.
95. RPV, 12.6.1922.
96. SK, vol 33, no 13, 28.6.1922.
97. *VII sjezd OSČ*, pp. 87-8.
98. SJ, vol 4, no 18, 25.6.1922.

99. KM, vol 4, no 26, 30.6.1922; A. Verbík and O. Franěk, eds., *Za jednotu odborů. Sborník věnovaný zrodu a rozvoji československého revolučního odborového hnutí 1921-1948*, Brno, 1973, p. 41.

100. SK, vol 33, no 13, 28.6.1922; Chalupa's splinter union of agricultural workers had been admitted into the OSČ in May, 1922. See, *Zpráva sekce lučebníků MVS 1922-1924*, p. 6 and SJ, vol 4, no 17, 10. 6.1922.

101. DK, vol 26, no 14, 29.7.1922; RO, vol 1, no 1, 7.9.1922.

102. SÚA OMV, 1920-1924 IV/k/44 20-970-22, kart 98, sv 14.

103. SÚA Presidium zemského úřadu, 1921-1930 8/5/38/5 207-411-10, kart 411, sv 10.

104. DK, vol 26, no 13, 15.7.1922.

105. KM, vol 4, no 27, 7.7.1922; *Zpráva a činnosti Svazu textilního dělnictva v Československé republice za období od 1.7.1918 do 31.12. 1922*, Brno, 1923, p. 26; *Zpráva sekce lučebníků MVS 1922-1924*, p. 5.

106. SÚA PZÚ, 1921-1930 8/5/38/5 207-411-10, kart 411, sv 10.

107. *Zpráva sekce lučebníků MVS 1922-1924*, pp. 3 and 7.

108. KM, vol 4, no 21, 26.5.1922.

109. See the articles by Vrabec and Uřidil in KM, vol 4, no 23, 9.6. 1922.

110. KM, vol 4, no 28, 14.7.1922.

111. Béla Kun, ed., *Kommunisticheskii internatsional v dokumentakh*, Moscow, 1933, p. 282; Václav Král, ed., *Cesta k leninismu. Prameny k dějinám KSČ v letech 1921-1929*, Prague, 1971, p. 89.

112. RP, 25.6.1922.

113. SK, vol 33, no 25, 13.12.1922. Karel Tetenka mentioned the letter at the Union of Builders' congress in November, 1922, but he did not indicate when it was sent.

114. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 13.7.1922. The expulsion was carried by 26 votes to seven.

115. It was claimed that Amsterdam, not Moscow, was splitting the trade union movement. See DK, vol 26, no 12, 24.6.1922.

116. OSČ, vol 26, no 16, 15.8.1922, p. 231. Furthermore, it was argued that Hais was attempting to combine two positions, one as vice-chairman of the OSČ, the other as a member of the Agitation Committee. Perhaps his "communist logic" could merge these posts, but in reality it was impossible. See, SJ, vol 4, no 20, 25.7.1922.

117. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 17.8.1922.
118. RPV, 18.7.1922.
119. RP, 19.7.1922; RPV, 19.7.1922.
120. RPV, 15.7.1922; RP, 4.8.1922.
121. KM, vol 4, no 31, 4.8.1922 and no 32, 11.8.1922.
122. DK, vol 26, no 15, 12.8.1922.
123. SK, vol 33, no 25, 13.12.1922.
124. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 17.8.1922; SJ, vol 4, no 22, 25.8.1922.
125. RP, 22.8.1922; DK, vol 26, no 16, 26.8.1922; RO, vol 1, no 1, 7.9.1922. It is interesting to note that the article in *Rudé právo* placed more emphasis on a united trade union front than either *Dělník* or *Rudý odborář*.
126. RO, vol 1, no 2, 28.9.1922.
127. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, pp. 132-3.
128. In June 1922, the second enlarged ECCI plenum had criticised the KSČ, stating that its "...work in trade union organisations is still very weak. The creation of communist fractions and the work of these fractions is only beginning. This must be implemented on a planned, well-organised and more intensive basis than hitherto.... The party must therefore make every effort to continue its higher level of communist activity in trade union organisations... to create fractions everywhere, even in unions which already possess communist leadership...." The resolution was reprinted in RP, 29.6.1922; see also, *Zpráva OSČ k VIII sjezdu*, p. 194.
129. In an interview with Dr. Dubský he mentioned that according to Šmeral's notes (now unfortunately locked away in the party archives) the trade union question was last discussed at an Executive Committee meeting at the end of August.
130. The immediate cause of the expulsion was the dissemination of pamphlets criticising the party line on organisational, tactical and trade union issues, although the rift had long-standing and deep roots. See, KM, vol 4, no 46, 17.11.1922 and no 47, 24.11.1922. The group was later reinstated by the fourth Comintern congress.
131. DK, vol 26, no 17, 9.9.1922.
132. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 14.9.1922.
133. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 9.11.1922.

134. VOA fond OSČ 6325/441, *Zprávy ústředního sekretariátu OSČ*, 17.11.1921.
135. SJ, vol 4, no 24, 25.9.1922.
136. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 12.10.1922; SJ, vol 4, no 25, 10.10.1922.
137. RO, vol 1, nos 5-6, 9.11.1922.
138. SK, vol 33, no 25, 13.12.1922.
139. RO, vol 1, no 3, 12.10.1922; see also, RP, 26.10.1922.
140. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 136.
141. RPV, 30.10.1922; SÚA PZÚ 1921-1930 8/5/38/5 207-411-10, kart 411, sv 10.
142. RO, vol 1, nos 5-6, 9.11.1922.
143. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, pp. 135 and 176; Dubský, "Hlavní tendence odborové politiky," p. 93.
144. KM, vol 4, no 29, 21.7.1922.
145. Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, p. 205; ZSÚS, vol 19, 1938, p. 791.
146. PL, 31.10.1922; RP, 31.10.1922.
147. DK, vol 26, no 21, 11.11.1922.
148. RP, 28.10.1922; RPV, 30.10.1922; RO, vol 1, nos 5-6, 9.11.1922; RP, 7.11.1922.
149. OSČ, vol 24, no 19, 1920, p. 253.
150. *Zpráva Svazu kovodělníků 1919-1922*, p. 63.
151. OSČ, vol 26, no 16, 15.8.1922, p. 221.
152. *Zpráva OSČ k VIII sjezdu*, p. 186.
153. OSČ, vol 26, no 16, 15.8.1922, p. 222.
154. *Zpráva OSČ k VIII sjezdu*, pp. 171 and 188-9.
155. OSČ, vol 26, no 19, 1.10.1922, p. 258.
156. PL, 26.9.1922.
157. *Příloha práva lidu*, 20.6.1922.
158. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, pp. 9-10.
159. *Zpráva ku IV sjezdu Svazu dělnictva lučebního, stavebního a cihlářského v Československé republice za dobu činnosti od 1.1.1919 do 31.12.1921*, Prague, 1922, p. 10.
160. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, pp. 3 and 10-11.
161. In Czechoslovakia, parliamentary deputies were subject to harsh party discipline and had to vote according to the line adopted by the

party leadership. There seems no reason to doubt that this "leadership orientation" in Czechoslovakia political life extended also to the trade unions. Union leaders enjoyed undue authority over the largely passive membership. For details on the party system see, Edward Táborský, *Czechoslovak Democracy at Work*, London, 1945, pp. 62-3.

162. *Inprecorr*, vol 2, no 111, 13.12.1922, p. 922.

163. RPV, 26.10.1922.

164. RP, 23.4.1925.

165. OAKvS, OSP č 145/1922 pres.

166. See above, p. 73.

167. *Zpráva Svazu textilního dělnictva 1918-1922*, p. 26; PL, 8.8. 1922. The tactic of misappropriating union property was seemingly common. In mid-July, Josef Pergl was suspended from his duties as union secretary in Ostrava for demanding the division of the funds and property of the District Trade Union Council. See, VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 13.7.1922.

168. Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, pp. 178 and 205.

169. *Inprecorr*, vol 2, no 106, 2.12.1922, p. 859.

170. See Table 2, p. 248.

171. *Zpráva OSČ k VIII sjezdu*, p. 190.

172. *Zpráva Svazu kovodělníků 1919-1922*, p. 63.

173. On the correlation between youth and radicalism, see Richard Cornell, *Revolutionary Vanguard: The Early Years of the Communist Youth International, 1914-1924*, Toronto, 1982, esp. chapter 3, pp. 44-64.

174. NZ, vol 29, no 7, 14.2.1923.

175. VOA fond OSČ, *Zpráva krajského sekretariátu v Pardubicích 1922*. Textile and agricultural workers in particular suffered hefty wage cuts.

176. Social Institute of the ČSR, *Social Policy*, Addendum.

177. VOA fond OSČ, *Zpráva krajského sekretariátu v Pardubicích 1922*.

178. Zinoviev's actual words were, "It is possible we shall have to carry out many more splits, and we shall still go to the socialists and say: 'Yes, we want unity; unity on this platform.'" Cited from Jane Degras, "United Front Tactics in the Comintern 1921-1928," in D. Footman ed. *International Communism*, St. Antony's Papers, no 9, London, 1960, p. 11.

179. OSČ, vol 26, no 19, 1.10.1922, p. 258. (My emphasis).
180. For membership figures in the 1920s, see Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, pp. 179 and 205; also Tables 2 and 4 pp. 248 and 250.

Chapter Four

1. When referring to the communist trade union movement as a whole, i.e. including the independent unions, I shall use the terms “Red Unions” or “Red trade union movement.” Otherwise, “MVS” refers only to that specific organisation.

2. SK, vol 31, no 17, 25.8.1920 and no 19, 22.9.1920 and vol 32, no 23, 16.11.1921.

3. The Comintern resolution on the foundation of the Profintern stated, “the amalgamation of related unions into one union must be affected by revolutionary means.” Cited from Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 1, p. 279.

4. See the ideas expounded by Stary of the chemical workers’ union in DK, vol 25, no 18, 24.9.1921.

5. DK, vol 25, no 21, 12.11.1921 and no 24, 24.12.1921.

6. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 11.

7. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, pp. 12-13.

8. DK, vol 26, no 24, 23.12.1922.

9. DK, vol 26, no 21, 11.11.1922; *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 11.

10. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, pp. 11-12; DK, vol 26, no 16, 26.8.1922.

11. RO, vol 2, no 1, 7.9.1922 admitted that the representatives of the builders and transport workers opposed the idea of an all-trade union organisation, arguing in favour of industrial unions. This was not mentioned in *Dělník*.

12. SK, vol 33, no 18, 6.9.1922.

13. All congress sessions were secret and therefore no stenographic record of the proceedings exists. One must rely on police and press reports, which, one suspects, were not always accurate.

14. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 12.

15. DK, vol 26, no 18, 23.9.1922.

16. RP, 28.10.1922 and 7.11.1922; RPV, 30.10.1922; SK, vol 33, no 24, 29.11.1922; RO, vol 1, nos 5-6, 9.11.1922; SÚA PZÚ 1921-1930 8/5/38/5 207-411-10, kart 411, sv 10.

17. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 138; Václav Král, ed., *Rudé odbory 1922-1939. Dokumenty, materiály, stati*, Prague, 1973, pp. 69-70.

18. SÚA PZÚ 1921-1930 8/5/38/5 207-411-10, kart 411, sv 10; Král, *Rudé odbory*, p. 79. Unfortunately, neither source identifies the "angry" delegates.

19. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 17; SÚA PMV 1920-1924 IV/K/44 225-98-1-39, kart 98, sv 14.

20. RP, 2 and 3.11.1922; RO, vol 1, nos. 5-6, 9.11.1922.

21. RPV, 30.10.1922. The figure given here seems inaccurate, as undoubtedly more speakers were opposed to Hais.

22. DL, vol 32, no 22, 31.10.1922; *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 16 (My emphasis).

23. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 18.

24. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 139; DK, vol 27, no 2, 27. 1.1923; *MVS v Československé republice. Stanovy a pravidla se změnami provedenými II řádným sjezdem*, Prague, 1926, pp. 16-17, 22, 37 and 54-5.

25. *II kongress Krasnogo internatsionala profsoyuzov v Moskve, 19 noyabrya - 2 dekabrya 1922*, Moscow, 1923, pp. 127-8, 133-4 and 186-7; *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 18.

26. The leader of the German textile workers, Baier, complained of "nationalist problems" at the third Profintern congress in July 1924. See RO, vol 2, nos 21-22, 31.7.1924.

27. *II kongress Krasnogo internatsionala*, pp. 156-7; RO, vol 1, no 13, 22.2.1923.

28. *II kongress Krasnogo internatsionala*, pp. 145-6 and 176; *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 19.

29. RO, vol 1, no 9, 21.12.1922.

30. RO, vol 1, no 10, 11.1.1923.

31. *II kongress Krasnogo internatsionala*, p. 143. On the need for centralisation, see Lozovsky's speech, pp. 185-6.

32. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 19. It is very interesting to note that this part of Hais's address was not published in the official minutes of the congress.

33. Moreover, the MVS claimed that the Czech delegation “*unanimously defended the decisions of the extraordinary congress.*” See RO, vol 1, no 10, 11.1.1923.

34. The idea of a *fait accompli* was suggested in SK, vol 37, no 17, 18.8.1926.

35. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 20.

36. Arno Hais subsequently recognised the significance of the organisational issue. See RO, vol 4, no 4, 29.10.1925.

37. However, even the KSČ admitted that the majority of the union board opposed joining the MVS. See RP, 8.11.1922.

38. SK, vol 33, no 23, 15.11.1922 and vol 34, no 1, 10.1.1923.

39. DL, vol 33, no 7, 3.4.1923.

40. DK, vol 27, no 6, 24.3.1923.

41. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, pp. 126-7; RO, vol 1, no 12, 8.2.1923; *Stavebník* surprisingly made no mention of this meeting.

42. RO, vol 1, no 12, 8.2.1923.

43. *Protokol prvního řádného sjezdu Komunistické strany Československa (sekce III Komunistické internacionály) konaného ve dnech 2, 3, 4 a 5 února 1923 v sále “Domoviny” v Praze VII*, Prague, 1923, pp. 18 and 101.

44. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, pp. 128-31; *Zpráva o činnosti za správní období let 1921-1924. Ústřední svaz stavebních dělníků v Československé republice*, Prague, 1925, pp. 11-12.

45. SK, vol 34, no 6, 21.3.1923.

46. SK, vol 34, no 9, 2.5.1923.

47. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, pp. 130-1.

48. *Zpráva stavebních dělníků 1921-1924*, pp. 12-13.

49. RO, vol 1, no 15, 22.3.1923.

50. DK, vol 27, no 7, 14.4.1923.

51. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 131.

52. Jane Degras, ed., *The Communist International 1919-1943. Documents*, vol 2, London, 1960, p. 34 (My emphasis).

53. SK, vol 34, no 19, 19.9.1923.

54. DK, vol 27, no 14, 28.7.1923. The merger of the Czech and German textile workers finally took place in June 1925 after prolonged negotiations. It was claimed that 16,000 German workers joined the MVS. See DK, vol 29, no 13, 11.7.1925.

55. One article said, with admirable understatement, that the introduction of the decision to form sections had "run into certain difficulties . . ." See, SK, vol 34, no 9, 2.5.1923 and also no 14, 11.7.1923.

56. RO, vol 2, no 10, 31.1.1924; DK, vol 28, no 2, 26.1.1924.

57. SK, vol 35, no 6, 19.3.1924.

58. RP, 7.5.1924; DK, vol 28, no 9, 10.5.1924; RO, vol 2, no 18, 15.5.1924.

59. *Zpráva stavebních dělníků 1921-1924*, p. 16. (My emphasis). The same source alleged that Kohn uttered "the memorable words" that "we know we made a mistake with the creation of the MVS, but we want everyone to make this mistake with us!" Indeed, Kohn did not categorically deny making this statement. See, *Stenografický protokol o jednání IV sjezdu Ústředního svazu stavebních dělníků v Československé republice*, Prague, 1925, p. 36b.

60. RP, 6.8.1924.

61. RP, 5.8.1924. (My emphasis).

62. RO, vol 2, nos 21-22, 31.7.1924.

63. For details on Schumacher, see E.H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country, 1924-1926*, vol 3, Penguin, London, 1972, pp. 107, 116 and 575-6; also Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 2, pp. 128-9.

64. *Resolutions and Decisions. Third World Congress of the Red International of Labor Unions held in Moscow July, 1924*, Chicago, n.d., pp. 60-2; VOA fond Rudé odbory, kart 1, inv jedn 7, *Rezoluce III sjezdu Rudé odborové internacionály*. (My emphasis).

65. RO, vol 3, no 2, 18.9.1924.

66. *Zpráva stavebních dělníků 1921-1924*, pp. 19-20.

67. DK, vol 28, no 16, 23.8.1924.

68. SK, vol 35, no 17, 20.8.1924.

69. DL, vol 34, no 17, 19.8.1924. (My emphasis).

70. RP, 2.10.1924; DL, vol 34, no 21, 14.10.1924; DK, vol 28, no 20, 25.10.1924.

71. DL, vol 34, no 22, 27.10.1924.

72. At the first meeting on 27 August, the independents, especially Handlř, had adamantly insisted that they hand over 75% of union dues to the MVS centre and *retain* the rest. The MVS representatives argued that the *whole sum* should be delivered over to the centre, and 25% should be returned to the unions. No agreement was reached on this thorny issue. See Král, *Rudé odbory*, pp. 102-3.

73. This final point was conceded by the MVS negotiators at the first meeting. See, Král, *Rudé odbory*, p. 102.

74. All eight conditions were published later in *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 134; for some unexplained reason, the conditions were printed in union journals as late as March and April, 1925. See, DK, vol 29, no 5, 14.3.1925 and SK, vol 36, no 7, 1.4.1925.

75. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, pp. 135-6; *Zpráva stavebních dělníků 1921-1924*, p. 22.

76. Král, *Rudé odbory*, p. 104.

77. *Protokol druhého řádného sjezdu Komunistické strany Československa který se konal ve dnech od 31 října až do 4 listopadu 1924 v sále "Domoviny" v Praze VII*, Prague, 1925, p. 9.

78. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 136.

79. SÚA PMV 1920-1924 IV /K/44 225-98-1-39, kart 98, sv 39.

80. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, pp. 136-7.

81. SK, vol 36, no 2, 21.1.1925.

82. RO, vol 3, no 10, 29.1.1925.

83. SK, vol 36, no 3, 4.2.1925.

84. DL, vol 35, no 4, 17.2.1925.

85. SK, vol 36, no 4, 18.2.1925.

86. DK, vol 29, no 5, 14.3.1925.

87. RO, vol 3, no 12, 19.2.1925.

88. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, pp. 137-8.

89. DK, vol 29, no 4, 28.2.1925.

90. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 138.

91. DK, vol 29, no 4, 28.2.1925.

92. RO, vol 3, no 14, 19.3.1925.

93. VOA fond stavebníci 8065/548, *Zápisy o schůzích svazového představenstva*, 17.9.1924-12.6.1928, meeting on 3.4.1925.

94. *Stenografický protokol IV sjezdu stavebních dělníků*, pp. 29b, 32-3b, 35-6b, 54b, 62-4b, 70b and 209b.

95. VOA fond stavebníci, *Zápisy o schůzích představenstva*, 17.8.1926. For the background of the financial issue see, *Zpráva stavebních dělníků 1921-1924*, pp. 10 and 14-15.

96. *Stenografický protokol IV sjezdu stavebních dělníků*, p. 173b.

97. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, pp. 138-9; see also DK, vol 29, no 8, 25.4.1925 and no 9, 8.5.1925; RO, vol 3, no 17, 14.5.1925. (My emphasis).

98. RO, vol 3, no 16, 23.4.1925.
99. DL, vol 35, no 12, 9.6.1925.
100. VOA fond stavebníci, *Zápisy o schůzích představenstva*, 13.1.1925, 16.6.1925, 1.9.1925, 27.9.1925 and 26.1.1926; RO, vol 4, no. 1, 17.9.1925.
101. DL, vol 35, no 12, 9.6.1925.
102. DK, vol 29, no 12, 27.6.1925.
193. RP, 25.6.1925; RO, vol 3, no 20, 2.7.1925.
104. VOA fond stavebníci, *Zápisy o schůzích představenstva*, 23.6.1925.
105. SK, vol 36, no 14, 8.7.1925.
106. DL, vol 35, no 15, 21.7.1925; DK, vol 29, no 15, 8.8.1925.
107. RP, 2.8.1925.
108. RP, 9, 15, 18, 23.8.1925 and 6.9.1925.
109. RP, 9.8.1925; RO, vol 3, no 23, 13.8.1925 and vol 4, no 1, 17.9.1925; *Nástin dějin československého odborového hnutí*, Prague, 1963, p. 439.
110. RO, vol 3, no 21, 16.7.1925.
111. DK, vol 29, no 16, 22.8.1925.
112. *Protokol třetího řádného sjezdu Komunistické strany Československa který se konal ve dnech 26-28 září 1925 v sálech Národního domu na Smíchově*, Prague, 1925, p. 6.
113. *Druhý řádný sjezd Mezinárodního všeodborového svazu v Československé republice*, Prague, 1926, p. 22.
114. SK, vol 36, nos 15, 17, 18 and 19, 22.7., 19.8., 2.9., and 16.9.1925.
115. SK, vol 36, no 17, 19.8.1925; *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 141.
116. *Zpráva o činnosti za správní období let 1925-1926. Ústřední svaz stavebních dělníků v Československé republice*, Prague, 1927, pp. 3-4; the formation of party fractions in all Red Unions was demanded by the third KSČ congress in September, 1925, but one can assume that they were established with special urgency in the Builders' Union. See, *Protokol III sjezdu KSČ*, pp. 75 and 78.
117. VOA fond stavebníci, *Zápisy o schůzích představenstva*, 8. 9., 13.10., 5.11.1925 and 26.1.1926; see also SV, 31.10.1925.
118. VOA fond stavebníci, *Zápisy o schůzích představenstva*, 1.9.1925.
119. SK, vol 36, no 20, 30.9.1925; DL, vol 35, no 19, 15.9.1925; RO, vol 4, no 2, 1.10.1925; *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 42.

120. Král, *Rudé odbory*, pp. 126-7.
121. DK, vol 29, no 24, 24.12.1925; RO, vol 4, nos 9-10, 21.1.1926.
122. *Protokol III sjezdu KSČ*, pp. 53 and 78; RO, vol 4, nos 7-8, 17.12.1925.
123. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, pp. 179-80.
124. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, pp. 63, 74, 78-9, 82-3; it is interesting to note, however, that a regional miners' conference in Kladno on 15 August 1925, whilst accepting the overall organisational structure of the MVS, also stated that "greater autonomy of sections" was required. See, DK, vol 29, no 17, 12.9.1925.
125. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, pp. 50, 52, and 87.
126. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, pp. 191-2. "Reinhardt's" real name was Alexander Abusch.
127. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, pp. 16-17.
128. DL, vol 36, no 14, 5.7.1926; DK, vol 30, no 13, 17.7.1926; RO, vol 4, no 21, 7.7.1926.
129. Unsuccessful negotiations were held with the OSČ Union of Woodworkers only five weeks after the MVS talks. See DL, vol 36, no 17, 17.8.1926.
130. For details of the agreement see, RO, vol 6, no 12, 5.7.1928.
131. Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, p. 179.
132. *Zpráva stavebních dělníků 1925-1926*, pp. 29-31; RP, 21. 7. 1926 claimed implausibly that a mere 1,000 builders supported Tetenka.
133. RO, vol 4, no 22, 22.7.1926; SK, vol 37, no 16, 4.8.1926 regarded the congress as "illegal."
134. *Zpráva o činnosti Mezinárodního všeodborového svazu v Československé republice k III řádnému sjezdu, konanému ve dnech 22-26 prosince 1929*, Prague, 1929, p. 51; a 1928 figure of 23,115 was given by Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, p. 205.
135. *Zpráva stavebních dělníků 1925-1926*, p. 27.
136. The 1924 figure is from *Zpráva stavebních dělníků 1921-1924*, pp. 46-51; Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, p. 205.
137. For instance, Lozovsky's letter to the MVS founding congress, see above, p. 99; unity was emphasised in the fourth and fifth Comintern congress resolutions on trade union activity. See, Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 1, pp. 413-16 and vol 2, pp. 131-3.
138. See the resolution of the third ECCI plenum of June 1923, which stated, "In those countries where two parallel trade union movements

exist, one reformist and one revolutionary, the unions expelled by the reformist federation should join the revolutionary federation.” in Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 2, p. 35.

139. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, p. 75.

140. *Stenografický protokol IV sjezdu stavebních dělníků*, pp. 35-6b.

141. See Hais's speech to the second MVS congress, in which he acknowledged that the MVS did not have great financial resources. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, p. 47; also Arno Hais's article on the need for members to pay higher dues than hitherto in RO, vol 4, no 11, 11.2.1926.

142. Tetenka claimed that the builders had paid out a further 130,814 crowns to the MVS, in addition to 30,000 in November, 1922. Nothing was repaid. See SK, vol 37, no 17, 18.8.1926.

143. *Zpráva stavebních dělníků 1921-1924*, p. 23.

144. The SDP daily asserted that Tetenka, Teska and Handlř were more opposed to Kohn than to Moscow. See PL, 21.2.1925.

145. A summary of the reasons of the dispute is given in SK, vol 36, no 19, 16.9.1925.

146. SK, vol 36, no 17, 19.8.1925.

Chapter Five

1. RP, 3 and 4.11.1921.

2. For more details on this strike see above, pp. 68-9.

3. NZ, vol 29, no 7, 14.2.1923.

4. *Zpráva za léta 1921-1923 k šestému sjezdu Svazu horníků v Československé republice*, Prague, 1924, p. 14.

5. *Zpráva horníků 1921-1923*, p. 8; NZ, vol 29, no 3, 17.1.1923.

6. *Zpráva za léta 1924-1926 k sedmému sjezdu Svazu horníků v Československé republice*, Prague, 1927, p. 17; NZ, vol 29, no 3, 17.1.1923.

7. The membership of the MVS miners' section at the end of 1922 stood at only 593. See Kotek, *Odborové hnutí zaměstnanců*, p. 205.

8. *Zpráva horníků 1924-1926*, pp. 17-18; *Zpráva horníků 1921-1923*, p. 9.

9. RP, 12.11.1922. The Executive Committee of the KSČ, following Profintern directives, decided that communists should stay in reformist

unions, and saw the MVS as a "temporary centre" of expelled unions and groups; for the Comintern position see, Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 1, p. 414.

10. *Protokol I sjezdu KSČ*, p. 19.

11. Rudolf Kohn succeeded Arno Hais as leader of the Trade Union Department at the first KSČ congress.

12. *Zpráva horníků 1921-1923*, p. 28. In 1921, before the division, there were 34,434 Czech and 8,549 Polish members, a total of 42,983.

13. *Zpráva horníků 1921-1923*, p. 17.

14. NZ, vol 29, no 13, 28.3.1923. A coalition of miners' unions had been created in March, 1920, comprising the OSČ, ČOD and German Social Democratic organisations. This emphasises the sense of, and desire for, unity among miners.

15. NZ, vol 29, no 15, 11.4.1923.

16. *Zpráva horníků 1921-1923*, p. 17.

17. RP, 8.4.1923.

18. NZ, vol 29, no 19, 9.5.1923.

19. RP, 15.4.1923.

20. RP, 23.4.1923.

21. OSČ, vol 27, no 15, 1.8.1923, p. 210.

22. NZ, vol 29, no 23, 6.6.1923.

23. NZ, vol 29, no 30, 25.7.1923.

24. RP, 15.6.1923.

25. RP, 7.7.1923 and 14.8.1923.

26. NZ, vol 29, no 14, 4.4.1923.

27. DK, vol 27, no 16, 25.8.1923; RP, 17.8.1923.

28. RO, vol 2, no 3, 13.10.1923; DK, vol 27, no 19, 13.10.1923; RP, 7.10.1923; NZ, vol 29, no 41, 10.10.1923.

29. DK, vol 27, no 14, 28.7.1923.

30. DK, vol 27, no 15, 11.8.1923.

31. RP, 12.9.1923.

32. For one attack on the Social Democratic Party see, RP, 20.9.1923.

33. *Inprecorr*, vol 3, no 60, 13.9.1923, pp. 666-7.

34. RP, 28.9.1923; see also DK, vol 27, no 19, 13.10.1923.

35. RP, 13.10.1923.

36. DK, vol 27, no 17, 8.9.1923; RP, 2.10.1923.

37. RP, 3.10.1923.
38. *Zpráva horníků 1921-1923*, p. 18; the KSČ reported that the voting had been 58 to 13. See, RP, 7.10.1923.
39. NZ, vol 29, no 41, 10.10.1923.
40. NZ, vol 29, no 41, 10.10.1923; *Zpráva horníků 1921-1923*, p. 18.
41. RO, vol 2, no 3, 13.10.1923.
42. RP, 12.10.1923; RP, vol 2, no 3, 13.10.1923.
43. DK, vol 27, no 19, 13.10.1923.
44. DD, 13.10.1923.
45. NZ, vol 29, no 43, 24.10.1923.
46. RP, 23.10.1923; DD, 25.10.1923; DK, vol 27, no 20, 27.10.1923. The fact that the KSČ-MVS appeal called for solidarity with the communist uprising in Germany is not without significance. The occupation of the Ruhr in early 1923 by French and Belgian troops and the resultant passive resistance and economic collapse in Germany encouraged radicals in the Comintern and German Communist Party to stage a revolutionary uprising in October. The militant enthusiasm engendered in Moscow and Berlin, which became particularly evident in the late summer and autumn of 1923, must surely have been felt in neighbouring Czechoslovakia. Indeed, it is possible that the split in the miners' union was undertaken on the direct orders of the Comintern, although I have no concrete evidence of Moscow's involvement.
47. *Zpráva horníků 1921-1923*, p. 19; NZ, vol 29, no 44, 31. 10. 1923 and no 48, 28.11.1923.
48. PL, 30.10.1923; *Zpráva horníků 1921-1923*, pp. 19-20.
49. RP, 28.10.1923; RO vol 2, no 4, 1.11.1923 likewise blamed the "right-wingers."
50. PL, 8.12.1923.
51. VOA fond horníci 3624/273, *Zápisy o schůzích představenstva Svazu horníků, 25 srpna 1918-26 ledna 1928*, meeting of 1.11.1923. The resolution was published in NZ, vol 29, no 45, 7.11.1923.
52. RP, 30.10.1923.
53. RPV, 6.11.1923; see also, RP, 9. 11.1923.
54. RP, 14.11.1923.
55. DK, vol 27, no 22, 17.11.1923; RO, vol 2, no 5, 15.11.1923.

56. RP, 13.11.1923; it was also stated that after the miners' strike "some groups" wished to leave the Union of Miners. See, DD, 11.11.1923.
57. Brda's words were reported in DD, 28.10.1923.
58. NZ, vol 29, no 44, 31.10.1923 and no 46, 14.11.1923.
59. *Zpráva o činnosti sekce horníků Mezinárodního všeodborového svazu v Československé republice za období od 1.11.1923 do 30.6.1925*, Prague, 1925, p. 5.
60. DD, 15.11.1923.
61. DD, 18.11.1923; *Zpráva horníků MVS 1923-1925*, p. 6.
62. DD, 22.11.1923.
63. PL, 11.12.1923.
64. DD, 28.11.1923; the KSČ asserted that two-thirds of the membership were behind the communists. See RP, 14.11.1923.
65. DK, vol 27, no 23, 8.12.1923.
66. For membership figures, see Tables 7 and 8, pp. 253-4.
67. *Zpráva horníků MVS 1923-1925*, p. 18.
68. According to the OSČ Union of Miners, there were "hardly 6,000" communist miners in Ostrava. See *Zpráva horníků 1921-1923*, p. 76. On the other hand, communists maintained that over a half of the Ostrava miners joined the MVS. See, RO, vol 2, no 13, 13.3.1924.
69. PL, 11.12.1923; reportedly eight million crowns were paid out in strike benefits. See, *Zpráva za léta 1927-1929 k osmému sjezdu Svazu horníků v Československé republice*, Prague, 1930, p. 54.
70. PL, 8.12.1923.
71. NZ, vol 29, no 49, 5.12.1923; Brožík wrote that, "in not one single instance was a member expelled from the union for his communist convictions or for activity in the Communist Party." See, NZ, vol 29, no 50, 12.12.1923. The Ostrava KSČ organ argued that Brožík had expelled members. See, DD, 4.12.1923.
72. NZ, vol 29, no 52, 25.12.1923.
73. VPL, 7.12.1923.
74. VOA fond horníci, *Zápisy o schůzích představenstva*, 30.12.1923. In protest against the divisive action of the KSČ, two Polish miners' leaders, Lizák and Götze, resigned from the party. See, VPL, 7.12.1923.
75. *Zpráva horníků MVS 1923-1925*, pp. 5-7. The union leadership was also blamed in a special miners' edition of the MVS journal. See DK, vol 27, 12.12.1923.

76. *Zpráva k II řádnému sjezdu o organizační činnosti KSC (sekce III internacionály)*, období 1923-1924, Prague, 1924, p. L.
77. *Zpráva horníků 1924-1926*, pp. 18-21. (My emphasis).
78. RP, 25.10.1925; see also, SV, 24 and 27.10.1925.
79. NZ, vol 29, no 48, 28.11.1923.
80. RO, vol 2, no 7-8, 13.12.1923.
81. See his speech in *Protokol I sjezdu KSC*, p. 93.
82. *Inprecorr*, vol 3, no 30, July, 1923, p. 532.
83. See above, p. 70.
84. See for instance RP, 21.6.1922 and ZK, vol 14, no 24, 14.6.1922.
85. DK, vol 27, no 11, 9.6.1923 and vol 28, no 12, 28.6.1924.
86. DK, vol 27, no 12, 23.6.1923 and vol 28, no 12.7.1924.
87. According to Sejpka, however, joint actions were undertaken in June, 1924, for a 10% wage rise. See the police report on an MVS section meeting on 18th September, 1924 in SÚA PMV 1920-1924 IV/K/44 225-98-1-39, kart 98, sv 14.
88. Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, vol 3, p. 577 note 1; Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 2, p. 133.
89. RP, 25.7.1924.
90. RO, vol 3, no 7-8, 11.12.1924.
91. RO, vol 2, no 21-22, 31.7.1924.
92. *Protokol II sjezdu KSC*, pp. 9 and 21.
93. SÚA PMV 1920-1924 IV/K/44 225-98-1-39, kart 98, sv 39.
94. RO, vol 3, no 13, 5.3.1925.
95. RO, vol 3, no 2, 18.9.1924.
96. RP, 14.9.1924; RO, vol 3, no 2, 18.9.1924.
97. DK, vol 29, no 1, 10.1.1925.
98. DK, vol 28, no 18, 27.9.1924.
99. DK, vol 28, no 19, 11.10.1924, no 23, 6.12.1924 and vol 29, no 1, 10.1.1925.
100. VOA fond kovodělníci 4390/318, *Zápisník schůzí představenstva Svazu kovodělníků v Praze*, 31.1.1925.
101. *Zpráva Svazu kovodělníků 1922-1925*, p. 50.
102. VOA fond kovodělníci, *Zápisník schůzí kovodělníků*, 1.2.1925. Reporting on the conference, the SDP daily stated that the communist metalworkers had to realise that they caused the splits in worker organisations. No other tactics than those of the OSC could be carried out. See, PL, 4.2.1925.

103. VOA fond kovodělníci, *Zápisník schůzí kovodělníků*, 4.2.1925.
104. *Zpráva Svazu kovodělníků 1922-1925*, p. 50.
105. RO, vol 3, no 13, 5.3.1925.
106. ZK, vol 17, no 7, 18.2.1925.
107. VOA fond kovodělníci, *Zápisník schůzí kovodělníků*, 11 and 25.2.1925; *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 40; see also Josef Kol-ský's memoirs, *Pod revolučním praporem*, Prague, 1963, p. 82.
108. *Zpráva Svazu kovodělníků 1922-1925*, pp. 51-4.
109. ZK, vol 17, no 10, 11.3.1925.
110. PL, 6.3.1925.
111. The demands were published in RP, 5.3.1925.
112. *Zpráva o činnosti sekce kovodělné Mezinárodního všeodborového svazu v Československé republice za období od 1.1.1925 do 31.12.1928*, Prague, 1929, pp. 45-6 and 53.
113. A new communist journal, *Jednotná fronta* asserted that the MVS section representatives, not just Hájek, had demanded a unification congress and negotiations with ČOD and German Social Democratic metalworkers. See, JF, vol 1, no 3, 13.3.1925.
114. *Zpráva Svazu kovodělníků 1922-1925*, pp. 54-6. (My emphasis).
115. VOA fond kovodělníci, *Zápisník schůzí kovodělníků*, 25.3.1925.
116. RO, vol 3, no 14, 19.3.1925.
117. *Zpráva Svazu kovodělníků 1922-1925*, pp. 56-7.
118. DK, vol 29, no 6, 28.3.1925.
119. *Zpráva Svazu kovodělníků 1922-1925*, pp. 58-9; see also, ZK, vol 17, no 13, 1.4.1925.
120. ZK, vol 17, no 15, 15.4.1925; a conference of Brno communist metalworkers had called for the continuation of the talks. See, DK, vol 29, no 7, 11.4.1925.
121. DK, vol 29, no 8, 25.4.1925; both the MVS and the KSČ attacked the Union of Metalworkers for its strike-breaking activities during the strike of metal, chemical and mine workers in Ostrava in late March and early April. *Dělník* stated, "the Union of Metalworkers aided the victory of the Vítkovice iron barons." See, DK, vol 29, no 7, 11.4.1925 and RP, 2.4.1925.
122. DK, vol. 29, no. 17, 12.9.1925. The same attitude was adopted by the MVS central leadership. See *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 40.

123. DK, vol 29, no 8, 25.4.1925.
124. VOA fond kovodělníci, *Zápisník schuzí kovodělníků*, 29.4., 20.5., and 3.6.1925.
125. *Zpráva kovodělné MVS*, pp. 44-54.
126. RP, 21.7.1925.
127. *Protokol III sjezdu KSČ*, p. 77.
128. DK, vol 29, no 11, 13.6.1925; see also Sejpka's article in RP, 7.6.1925.
129. RO, vol 3, no 13, 5.3.1925.
130. In 1925, the MVS proposed the dissolution of all existing trade union centres as a precondition of renewed unity. See the "MVS Manifesto" in DK, vol 29, no 8, 25.4.1925.
131. *Zpráva Svazu kovodelníků 1922-1925*, pp. 49-50.
132. *VIII sjezd Odborového sdružení československého. Zápis o jeho zasedání 3-6 června 1926*, Prague, 1927, p. 76; see also the speeches made by Hampl, Šantrůček and Müller, pp. 81-5.
133. VOA fond OSČ, *Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva*, 1.4.1927.
134. *Zpráva k IX sjezdu Odborového sdružení československého. Hospodářské poměry, sociální politika a odborové hnutí v letech 1926-1929*, Prague, 1930, p. 402.
135. DK, vol 31, no 6, 26.3.1927.
136. DK, vol 31, no 7, 9.4.1927; RO, vol 5, no 12, 14.4.1927.
137. VOA fond horníci, *Zápisy o schůzích představenstva*, 31.3.1927.
138. DK, vol 31, no 24, 24.12.1927; RO, 5, no 24, 1.12.1927.
139. There are numerous examples in communist journals of the rejection on the part of the OSČ and ČOD unions of any kind of united front with MVS organisations: RO, vol 4, no 14, 18.3.1926; no 18, 20.5.1926; no 23-24, 3.9.1926; vol 5, no 7, 20.1.1927; vol 6, no 1, 18.1.1928; DK, vol 28, no 13, 12.7.1924; no 20, 25.10.1924; vol 29, no 12, 27.6.1925; no 24, 24.12.1925; vol 30, no 11, 12.6.1926; vol 31, no 3, 12.2.1927; no 8, 23, 4.1927; no 17, 10.9.1927; no 18, 24.9.1927; no 19, 8.10.1927; no 22, 26.11.1927; vol 32, no 2, 14.1.1928; see also PL, 4.2.1925.
140. Miloš Hájek, *Jednotná fronta. K politické orientaci Komunistické internacionály v letech 1921-1935*, Prague, 1969, pp. 266-8.
141. RO, vol 3, no 9, 14.1.1925.

142. DK, vol 31, no 4, 26.2.1927.

143. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 33.

Chapter Six

1. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, pp. 28-9 and 43-4; Rudolf Hájek reiterated precisely the same themes in *První řádný sjezd sekce horníků MVS*, Prague, 1926, pp. 63-4.

2. See above, p. 68.

3. For an examination of the political developments in the KSČ in the 1920s, see H. Gordon Skilling, "The Comintern and Czechoslovak Communism, 1921-1929," in *American Slavic and East European Review*, vol 19, no 2, 1960, pp. 234-47; Zinner, *Communist Strategy and Tactics*, pp. 36-49; Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, vol 3, pp. 173-88 and 384-93; Suda, *Zealots and Rebels*, pp. 50-119; Rupnik, *Histoire du Parti communiste tchécoslovaque*, pp. 55-82. On the agrarian question, see George Jackson Jr., *Comintern and Peasant in East Europe, 1919-1930*, New York, 1966, pp. 266-97.

4. Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, vol 3, pp. 574 and 593.

5. Dubský, *KSČ a odborové hnutí*, p. 140.

6. DK, vol 26, no 21, 11.11.1922; see also Hais's article from April, 1923 in which he stated that the Brno conference of opposition unionists in June, 1922 had expressed the idea of *all* revolutionary workers joining ranks in one great organisation, in DK, vol. 27, no. 8, 28.4.1923.

7. Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, vol 3, pp. 545 and 555.

8. Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 1, p. 414.

9. RP, 12.11.1922; RO, vol 1, no 7, 23.11.1922.

10. SÚA PMV, 1920-1924 IV/K/44 255-98-36, kart 98, sv 36.

11. *Inprecorr*, vol 4, no 55, 4.8.1924, p. 586; RP, 26.7.1924.

12. *Protokol I sjezd KSČ*, pp. 19, 93-4 and 98.

13. RO, vol 1, no 14, 8.3.1923.

14. Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, vol 3, p. 177.

15. Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 2, p. 35; Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, vol 3, p. 556.

16. RP, 27.9.1923.

17. RPV, 10.7.1924.

18. DK, vol. 28, no. 9, 10.5.1924.
19. Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, vol 3, p. 580; Hais's and Lozovsky's speeches were summarised in RP, 6.8.1924 and DK, vol 28, no 14, 26.7.1924.
20. SÚA PMV, 1920-1924 IV/K/44 225-98-24, kart 98, sv 24.
21. DK, vol 28, no 14, 26.7.1924.
22. *Protokol II sjezdu KSC*, pp. 9, 21 and 88-9.
23. DK, vol 29, no 2, 24.1.1925; see also RP, 14.12.1924.
24. *Protokol III sjezdu KSC*, pp. 51 and 78.
25. *Protokol čtvrtého řádného sjezdu Komunistické strany Československa (sekce III Internacionály) který se konal ve dnech 25, 26, 27 a 28 března 1927 v sále Národního domu v Praze na Smíchově*, Prague, 1927, pp. 62, 79, 94 and 106-7.
26. RP, 18.12.1924.
27. RP, 15.1.1925.
28. DK, vol 29, no 2, 24.1.1925.
29. KR, vol 2, no 4, 15.2.1925.
30. DK, vol 29, no 4, 28.2.1925; the resolution was printed in *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, pp. 33-4.
31. RO, vol 3, no 18, 28.5.1925.
32. RO, vo. 3, no. 19, 18.6.1925; according to Rudolf Hájek, Arno Hais told him that "it is impossible to emphasise work in reformist unions when there is the MVS." Hájek also recalled that Šmeral opposed the transfer of communists to the Red Unions. See Rudolf Hájek, *Za námi cesta neschůdná*, Prague, 1966, pp. 78 and 85.
33. The principal concern of the fifth ECCI plenum was Leninist tactics and Bolshevisation. The resolution stated "one of the most important elements of the teaching of Leninism is its teaching about the work of communists even in the most reactionary trade unions. . . . The most important element of Bolshevisation consists in paying a hundred times more attention than hitherto to work in existing social-democratic and other (yellow, national-socialist, Christian and Fascist) trade unions. . . . Only thus can the trade unions be freed in practice from the corrupting influence of reformism." Quoted from Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, vol 3, p. 595. See also Lozovsky's comments on Czechoslovakia, which concentrated on the need for fractions in *all* trade unions, in *Inprecorr*, vol 5, no 32, 16.4.1925, p. 427.

34. RP, 21.4.1925.
35. *Inprecorr*, vol 5, no 32, 16.4.1925, p. 422.
36. *Bolshevising the Communist International. Report of the Enlarged Executive of the Communist International, March 21st to April 14th, 1925*, London, n.d., p. 27.
37. RP, 27.10.1925.
38. KR, vol 3, no 2, 15.1.1926.
39. Kohn presented these figures in KR, vol 3, no 1, 1.1.1926; see also his article in RP, 7.1.1926.
40. *Zpráva ku IV řádnému sjezdu o činnosti Komunistické strany Československa*, Prague, 1927, Dodatek, p. 10; CI, vol 4, no 10, 30.6.1927, p. 196.
41. *Zpráva ku IV sjezdu KSČ*, Dodatek, p. 10.
42. *Inprecorr*, vol 5, no 88, 21.12.1925, p. 1336.
43. SOAvB, Policejní ředitelství Brno, B26 2271 I, *Zpráva ku všeodborové konferenci kraje brněnského MVS, 9.1.1927*. The largest groups in the Brno area were the textile workers with 3,800 members, the metalworkers with 3,600, the miners with 1,300, the chemical workers with 1,255 and the agricultural labourers with 1,020. The total MVS regional membership at the end of 1926 was 13,718.
44. RP, 7.2.1926.
45. Stern condemned the passivity of the party leadership in KR, vol 3, no 2, 15.1.1926.
46. In one article, Josef Hais argued that the strengthening of the MVS was the best way to create a united front. See, DK, vol 27, no 21, 10.11.1923.
47. RO, vol 2, no 18, 15.5.1924.
48. On European developments, see below pp. 236-46; for details of the united front tactic, see *The Red International of Labour Unions. Second World Congress: Resolutions and Decisions, 19 November-2 December, 1922*, London, n.d., pp. 22-4.
49. Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 1, pp. 259-61.
50. Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 2, pp. 35 and 66-8.
51. *Protokol III sjezdu KSČ*, pp. 75-7.
52. *Protokol I sjezdu KSČ*, pp. 19 and 98.
53. RP, 15.6.1923.
54. RP, 14.8.1923.

55. RO, vol 1, no 15, 22.3.1923.
56. RP, 30.6.1923.
57. RP, 7.7.1923.
58. RP, 14.8.1923.
59. RP, 7.5.1924. No mention of this section of the resolution was made in an article devoted to the conference in DK, vol 28, no 9, 10.5.1924. However, it was reported in RO, vol 2, no 18, 15.5.1924.
60. CI, vol 1, no 4, May, 1924, pp. 49-50.
61. CI, vol 1, no 7, July, 1924, p. 78.
62. Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 2, pp. 132-3. (My emphasis).
63. RO, vol 2, no 21-22, 31.7.1924; RP, 6.8.1924.
64. DK, vol 28, no 14, 26.7.1924.
65. *Protokol II sjezdu KSC*, pp. 9-10.
66. RO, vol 3, no 10, 29.1.1925.
67. RO, vol 3, no 19, 18.6.1925.
68. *Protokol III sjezdu KSC*, pp. 54-5.
69. SÚA PMV, 1925-1930 X/M/21/1 225-508-2, kart 508, sv 2.
70. SOAvB, Policejní ředitelství, B26 2271 I, *Zpráva brněnského MVS*, 9.1.1927.
71. Peter A. Toma, "The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia," in Stephen Fischer-Galati, ed., *The Communist Parties of Eastern Europe*, New York, 1979, p. 92.
72. SÚA PMV, 1920-1924 IV/K/44 225-98-39, kart 98, sv 39.
73. *Inprecorr*, vol 5, no 23, 1925, p. 323.
74. CI, vol 4, no 8, 30.5.1927, p. 159.
75. *Inprecorr*, vol 5, no 22, 1925, p. 319.
76. *Inprecorr*, vol 5, no 23, 1925, pp. 322-3.
77. *Inprecorr*, vol 5, no 27, 6.4.1925, p. 354.
78. *Bolshevising the Communist International*, p. 27.
79. RP, 26.3.1926.
80. RP, 12.3.1926.
81. See above, note 33, p. 298.
82. Extracts of the resolution on fractions in trade unions are quoted in Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 2, pp. 268-71.
83. *Inprecorr*, vol 5, no 88, 21.12.1925, p. 1336.
84. *Inprecorr*, vol 5, no 32, 16.4.1925, p. 429.

85. KR, vol 3, no 1, 1.1.1926.
86. KR, vol 3, no 2, 15.1.1926.
87. *Zpráva k II sjezdu KSČ*, pp. XLVIII; RP, 7.1.1926.
88. See his article in KR, vol 4, no 1, January, 1927.
89. *Protokol IV sjezdu KSČ*, pp. 58-9 and 61-2.
90. *Protokol IV sjezdu KSČ*, p. 106.
91. RP, 17.11.1927.
92. RP, 25.12.1927.
93. Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 2, p. 192.
94. For instance see Josef Hais's article in support of fractions in both reformist and Red Unions in RP, 25.1.1927 and his speech to the fourth party congress in *Protokol IV sjezdu KSČ*, pp. 78-9; see also Arno Hais's speech to a KSČ political conference reprinted in RP, 22.1.1926.
95. CI, vol 4, no 9, 15.6.1927, pp. 175 and 179.

Chapter Seven

1. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, p. 23; reprinted in Král, *Rudé odbory*, p. 127.
2. *Protokol II sjezdu KSČ*, p. 9 and *Protokol III sjezdu KSČ*, p. 78; on the eve of the MVS congress, Kohn argued that greater administrative freedom for sections was a necessity, in RP, 7.1.1926; see also Baier's article in RO, vol 4, no 9-10, 21.1.1926.
3. DK, vol 29, no 24, 24.12.1925.
4. RO, vol 4, no 7-8, 17.12.1925.
5. DK, vol 29, no 19, 10.10.1925.
6. RO, vol 4, no 7-8, 17.12.1925; see also no 3, 15.10.1925.
7. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, pp. 65 and 70-2.
8. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, p. 76.
9. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, pp. 48-9, 82-3 and 86.
10. The views of the glass workers and miners were outlined in DK, vol 30, no 2, 23.1.1926; see also the speech by the glass worker, Harus, in *Druhý sjezd MVS*, pp. 80-1.
11. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, p. 180; see also *Stanovy a pravidla MVS*, pp. 16-17.
12. RO, vol 4, no 11, 11.2.1926.
13. For the Profintern congress resolution, see *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, pp. 21-2.

14. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, pp. 191-2.
15. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, pp. 27-8.
16. RP, 31.1.1926.
17. RP, 7.2.1926.
18. RP, 20.10.1926.
19. *Protokol IV sjezdu KSČ*, pp. 90-1.
20. *Protokol IV sjezdu KSČ*, p. 92.
21. For details of the aims of the recruitment campaign see, DK, vol 30, no 19, 9.10.1926 and no 20, 23.10.1926; also RO, vol 5, no 2, 28.10.1926.
22. DK, vol 31, no 3, 12.2.1927, no 4, 26.2.1927 and no 5, 12.3.1927.
23. *Zpráva MVS k III sjezdu*, p. 51; see also Table 2, p. 248.
24. *Protokol IV sjezdu KSČ*, pp. 62-3 and 69-70.
25. RO, vol 3, no 20, 2.7.1925.
26. SÚA PMV, 1920-1924 IV/K/44 225-98-36, kart 98, sv 36.
27. The balance of MVS credits and debits in the years 1923-1928 was as follows:

	Credits	Debits (in crowns)
1923	7,493,555	7,254,378
1924	10,077,789	9,113,164
1925	11,518,728	10,958,512
1926	12,914,959	11,835,241
1927	13,331,868	12,303,656
1928	14,521,122	15,080,156

Sources:

- 1923-1924 *Druhý sjezd MVS*, p. 30.
 1925-1928 *Zpráva MVS k III sjezdu*, p. 53.

28. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, pp. 47 and 51.
29. RO, vol 4, no 11, 11.2.1926; the same appeal was made almost a year later in DK, vol 31, no 1, 15.1.1927.
30. DK, vol 30, no 4, 27.2.1926; RO, vol 4, no 9-10, 21.1.1926.
31. From an official police report on the second MVS congress, re-printed in Král, *Rudé odbory*, p. 139.

32. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, p. 72.
33. Hájek, *Za námi cesta neschůdná*, pp. 78-9.
34. Rudolf Hájek, "Puč likvidátorů v Mezinárodním všeodborovém svazu," in *Za revoluční odbory*, pp. 307-8.
35. Král, *Rudé odbory*, p. 29.
36. Pavel Reiman, *Ve dvacátých letech: Vzpomínky*, Prague, 1966, pp. 116-17 and 293-4.
37. These members of the Chemical section were in the MVS central leadership between 1926 and 1928: Josef Hais, František Halík, F. Černý, V. Nachtman and V. Havránek. In addition, Arno Hais played a prominent role as editor of *Rudý odborář* and *Dělník*.
38. Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 2, pp. 72, 127-8, 132-4 and 151-2.
39. Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, vol 3, p. 577 note 1; see also, RP, 25.7.1924.
40. RO, vol 2, no 21-22, 31.7.1924; RP, 5.8.1924.
41. RP, 26.5.1925.
42. *Protokol III sjezdu KSČ*, p. 77.
43. RP, 24.9.1925.
44. *Inprecorr*, vol 6, no 22, March, 1926, p. 347.
45. Rudolf Hájek, "40 let od vzniku revolučního odborového hnutí v ČSR," in *PkDKSČ*, vol 2, no 6, 1962, p. 922.
46. See above, pp. 150-1.
47. VOA fond Rudé odbory, kart 12, inv jedn 538, *Nové cesty Rudých odborů. Usnesení a rezoluce III řádného sjezdu MVS*, Prague, n.d., p. 7.
48. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, p. 25; the same opinion was expressed by Novák at the congress, p. 177.
49. *Protokol IV sjezdu KSČ*, pp. 58- 80 and 93.
50. See Stern's article in RP, 26.5.1925.
51. This was admitted by Zápotocký in his speech to the fourth party congress. See *Protokol IV sjezdu KSČ*, p. 54.
52. Arno Hais recognised this problem in RO, vol 3, no 9, 24.1.1925.
53. *Inprecorr*, vol 4, no 49, 24.7.1924, p. 501.
54. A figure of 11.7% was given in RO, vol 5, no 23, 17.11.1927.
55. DK, vol 28, no 19, 11.10.1924.

56. DK, vol 28, no 21, 8.11.1924; vol 29, no 2, 24.1.1925; RP, 1.2.1925; *Inprecorr*, vol 4, no 75, 23.10.1924, pp. 835-6.
57. Dubský, *Závodní výbory a rady*, p. 123.
58. See for instance Hampl's denunciation of the factory council congress in DK, vol 28, no 18, 27.9.1924; the OSČ rejected any joint action with the Committee on 21 December, 1924. See DK, vol 29, no 1, 10.1.1925.
59. RO, vol 4, no 15-16, 1.4.1926; for more details on the NWC see, Dubský, *Závodní výbory a rady*, pp. 74-127.
60. JF, vol 1, no 12, 4.8.1925.
61. See Rudolf Slánský's speech in *Protokol V řádného sjezdu Komunistické strany Československa (sekce Komunistické internacionály) který se konal ve dnech 18 až 23 února 1929 v Praze*, Prague, n.d., p. 83.
62. Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 1, p. 421.
63. RO, vol 2, no 21-22, 31.7.1924 and no 23, 14.8.1924.
64. RPV, 28.4.1922 and 31.5.1922; RP, 12.9.1923.
65. A. Hais and R. Hájek, *Rudé odborové hnutí v letech 1923-1924*, Prague, 1926, p. 114.
66. RP, 6.2.1925.
67. Figures varied from 99% in DK, vol 29, no 6, 28.3.1925, to 98.8% in RP, 18.3.1925, to as low as 95% in *Protokol III sjezdu KSČ*, p. 77.
68. RP, 18 and 29.3.1925; *Zpráva horníků MVS 1923-1925*, pp. 14-15.
69. DK, vol 29, no 6, 28.3.1925.
70. Hais and Hájek, *Rudé odborové hnutí*, p. 110.
71. Jan Steiner, *Za jednotnou frontu proti kapitálu. Základní otázky vedení třídních bojů a politiky KSČ v ostravské průmyslové oblasti v letech 1924-1925*, Ostrava, 1969, p. 127.
72. Hais and Hájek, *Rudé odborové hnutí*, p. 111.
73. DK, vol 29, no 7, 11.4.1925; Hais and Hájek, *Rudé odborové hnutí*, p. 111; however, one Social Democratic source stated that only 70% of miners struck. See, *Zpráva horníků 1924-1926*, p. 111.
74. Steiner, *Za jednotnou frontu*, p. 125.
75. PL, 31.3.1925; *Inprecorr*, vol 5, no 30, 9.4.1925, p. 398.
76. Hais and Hájek, *Rudé odborové hnutí*, p. 111.
77. *Zpráva horníků 1924-1926*, p. 111.

78. RO, vol 3, no 16, 23.4.1925.
79. DK, vol 29, no 7, 11.4.1925; RP, 31.3.1925.
80. Hais and Hájek, *Rudé odborové hnutí*, p. 114.
81. *Protokol III sjezdu KSČ*, pp. 77; see also the speeches of Valčák, Kohn and Bolen, who were highly critical of the Kladno miners, pp. 42, 51 and 59.
82. Steiner, *Za jednotnou frontu*, pp. 130-1.
83. PL, 31.3.1925.
84. PL, 24, 28 and 31.3.1925.
85. *Zpráva horníků 1924-1926*, pp. 110 and 112-13.
86. RP, 24.7.1925.
87. *Zpráva horníků 1924-1926*, pp. 112 and 114.
88. According to one Czech historian, "the Red Unions were clearly in a difficult financial situation," and had trouble paying benefits to striking workers. See, Steiner, *Za jednotnou frontu*, p. 129.
89. *Zpráva o činnosti sekce lučebníků MVS v Československé republice za období 1925-1928*, Prague, 1929, pp. 5-6.
90. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, pp. 97 and 215.
91. RO, vol 4, no 1, 17.9.1925.
92. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, p. 177.
93. *Protokol IV sjezdu KSČ*, p. 68.
94. RO, vol 5, no 11, 17.3.1927.
95. *Druhý sjezd MVS*, pp. 12-15.
96. *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, pp. 45-7.
97. Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 2, pp. 296-7.
98. RP, 25.3.1926 and 16.9.1926.
99. *Protokol III řádného sjezdu Komunistické strany Československa 26-28 září 1925*, Prague, 1967, p. 338.
100. *Zpráva ku IV sjezdu KSČ*, p. 36.
101. *Protokol III sjezdu KSČ*, 1967, p. 340.
102. *Zpráva k II sjezdu KSČ*, p. XLIX.
103. *Protokol I sjezdu KSČ*, p. 4.
104. *Protokol II sjezdu KSČ*, p. 9.
105. *Protokol III sjezdu KSČ*, p. 77.
106. *Protokol IV sjezdu KSČ*, pp. 79-80, 93-4 and 106.
107. RP, 16.1.1927.
108. RP, 1.5.1927.

109. *Protokol I sjezdu KSČ*, p. 99.
110. DK, vol 28, no 23, 6.12.1924.
111. *Protokol III sjezdu KSČ*, p. 7.
112. KR, vol 2, no 4, 15.2.1925.
113. Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, vol 3, p. 389.
114. *Inprecorr*, vol 5, no 32, 16.4.1925, p. 429.
115. I.V. Stalin, *Sochineniya*, tom 7, Moscow, 1947, p. 63.
116. This was recognised by Arno Hais in RO, vol 3, no 20, 2.7.1925.
117. RP, 26.5.1925.
118. *Protokol III sjezdu KSČ*, p. 78.
119. PL, 11.2.1925.
120. See the articles by Neurath, which mentioned the scope of the opposition in Brno, in *Inprecorr*, vol 5, nos 18 and 43, March and May, 1925, pp. 263 and 562; see also, *Protokol III sjezdu KSČ*, pp. 5-6 and Reiman et al., *Dějiny KSČ*, p. 213.
121. Neurath wrote that Josef Hais harboured Schumacherite sentiments, RP, 21.4.1925.
122. PL, 20.2.1925.
123. Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, vol 3, pp. 386-7.
124. *Inprecorr*, vol 5, no 18, March, 1925, p. 263.
125. Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, vol 3, p. 386.
126. *Inprecorr*, vol 5, no 32, 16.4.1925, p. 417.
127. RP, 10.6.1927. Vaněk was a member of a rightist group, which consisted of Hůla, Handlř, Friedrich, Görlich, Hora, and M. Vaněk. They were accused by ECCI of sabotaging the party's efforts in the trade union movement. See, *Inprecorr*, vol 6, no 40, June, 1926, p. 652.
128. KR, vol 3, no 2, 15.1.1926; see also Stern's article in RP, 7.2.1926.
129. Reiman, *Ve dvacátých letech*, p. 294.
130. RO, vol 3, no 7-8, 11.12.1924.
131. SÚA PMV, 1920-1924 IV/K/44 225-98-39, kart 98, sv 39.
132. RP, 23 and 24.4.1925; SV, 18.4.1925; Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, vol 3, p. 390.
133. RP, 26.5.1925; RO, vol 3, no 20, 2.7.1925.
134. DK, vol 29, no 8, 25.4.1925; RP, 1.5.1925; RO, vol 3, no 17, 14.5.1925.
135. DK, vol 29, no 12, 27.6.1925; *Zpráva MVS za období 1923-1924*, p. 35.

136. *Protokol III sjezdu KSC*, pp. 52 and 55.
137. RO, vol 3, no 18, 28.5.1925.
138. *První sjezd horníků MVS*, p. 69; Hájek repeated his argument in DK, vol 30, no 8, 24.4.1926.
139. On several occasions Josef Hais professed loyalty to the party. See, *Protokol III sjezdu KSC*, p. 55; *Druhý sjezd MVS*, p. 41 and *Protokol IV sjezdu KSC*, pp. 78-9.

Chapter Eight

1. *Zpráva MVS k III sjezdu*, p. 2.
2. Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 2, pp. 456-8, 461, 514-15 and 523.
3. Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 2, pp. 131 and 147. For details on the origin of the term "social fascism," see Theodore Draper, "The Ghost of Social-Fascism," in *Commentary*, vol 47, no 2, 1969, pp. 29-42; on the evolution of the "class against class" theory, see the same author's "The Strange Case of the Comintern," in *Survey*, vol 18, no 3, 1972, pp. 91-137.
4. RP, 24.9.1925; DK, vol 28, no 13, 12.7.1924.
5. Degras, *The Communist International*, vol 2, pp. 433-5.
6. CI, vol 5, no 5, 1.3.1928, p. 113. Lozovsky was a keen advocate of the new hardline approach, seeing it as an ideal opportunity to create independent Red trade unions affiliated to the Profintern.
7. RP, 20 and 31.1.1928.
8. CI, vol 5, no 5, 1.3.1928, p. 116.
9. CI, vol 5, no 4, 15.2.1928, p. 79.
10. *Zpráva MVS k III sjezdu*, p. 48.
11. RP, 12.2.1928; reprinted in Král, *Rudé odbory*, pp. 168-9.
12. RP, 28.2.1928.
13. RP, 16.2.1928.
14. RP, 13.3.1928.
15. RP, 20.3.1928.
16. RP, 24.3.1928.
17. RP, 22.2.1928.
18. RP, 20.3.1928; for similar criticisms of the MVS, see KR, vol 5, no 2, February 1928.

19. DK, vol 32, no 3, 21.1.1928.
20. See above, pp. 101-2.
21. RO, vol 6, no 2, 2.2.1928; DK, vol 32, no 4, 28.1.1928.
22. DK, vol 32, no 6, 11.2.1928; RP, 10 and 11.2.1928.
23. RP, 15.2.1928.
24. RO, vol 6, no 3, 16.2.1928.
25. KR, vol 5, no 3, March, 1928. (My emphasis).
26. RP, 4.3.1928.
27. DK, vol 32, no 10, 10.3.1928.
28. CI, vol 5, no 6, 15.3.1928, p. 147; see also, RO, vol 6, no 5, 15.3.1928.
29. KR, vol 5, no 4, April, 1928.
30. RO, vol 6, no 9, 24.5.1928.
31. *Protokol V sjezdu KSČ*, p. 83.
32. RP, 6.4.1928.
33. *Inprecorr*, vol 8, no 20, 29.3.1928, p. 403.
34. A prime example of the fluctuation in the MVS membership was seen in the metalworker section. In 1927, 4,997 new members joined, but overall membership fell in that year by 2,318. Thus, 7,315 workers either died or left the section. See, *Zpráva kovodělné MVS*, pp. 61 and 63.
35. RP, 7.4.1928; Kohn reiterated the "transit house" idea in his address to the fifth party congress. See, *Protokol V sjezdu KSČ*, p. 94.
36. RO, vol 6, no 6, 19.4.1928.
37. *Report of the Fourth Congress of the R.I.L.U.*, London, 1928, p. 157.
38. RO, vol 6, no 7, 26.4.1928.
39. VOA fond Rudé odbory, *Nové cesty Rudých odborů*, pp. 3-4.
40. *Report of the Fourth*, pp. 152-7; see also VOA fond Rudé odbory, kart 1, inv jedn 14, *Usnesení IV sjezdu ROI a poměry v MVS*.
41. DK, vol 32, no 17, 28.4.1928; RP, 25.4.1928.
42. *Zpráva MVS k III sjezdu*, p. 2; RO, vol 7, no 5-7, 1.5.1929.
43. Hájek, "Puč likvidátorů," in *Za revoluční odbory*, pp. 307-8 and 313.
44. Hájek, *Za námi cesta neschůdná*, p. 92.
45. VOA fond Čestný soud, ÚRO 1945-1946, kart 2, inv jedn 11, Arno Hais.
46. RP, 1.5.1928.
47. SÚA PZÚ, 1921-1930 8/5/40/13 207-412-55, kart 412, sv 55.

48. RO, vol 6, no 17, 30.8.1928; RP, 9.8.1928.
49. Hájek, "Puč likvidátorů," in *Za revoluční odbory*, p. 313.
50. PL, 3.6.1928.
51. SÚA PZÚ, 1921-1930 8/5/40/13 207-412-55, kart 412, sv 55.
52. VOA fond Rudé odbory, kart 1, inv jedn 12, *Rezoluce Exekutivy ROI*; although issued in August, the resolution was printed in Czechoslovakia only in November. See, RO, vol 6, no 22, 8.11.1928.
53. RP, 23.5.1928.
54. DK, vol 32, no 29, 21.7.1928.
55. DK, vol 32, no 40, 6.10.1928.
56. For a somewhat inaccurate account of the sixth congress, see Hájek, *Za námi cesta neschůdná*, p. 99.
57. RP, 14.8.1928.
58. DK, vol 32, no 31, 4.8.1928. The appeal was rejected by the OSČ, see, no 34, 25.8.1928.
59. *Zpráva MVS k III sjezdu*, pp. 4 and 44.
60. The Executive of the Profintern to the third MVS congress in RP, 10.2.1929.
61. See for instance the articles on the need for a reorganisation of the MVS by Nádvorník, Sýkora and Šrámek in DK, vol 32, no 39, 29.9.1928.
62. *Inprecorr*, vol 8, no 69, 5.10.1928, pp. 1261-2 and no 73, 19.10.1928, pp. 1335-6.
63. RP, 25.10.1928.
64. DK, vol 32, no 48, 1.12.1928.
65. RP, 2.12.1928.
66. VOA fond OSČ 6266/439A, *Schůze odborové rady Velké Prahy, 1921-1929*, 31.8.1928.
67. DK, vol 32, no 49, 8.12.1928.
68. PL, 8.12.1928.
69. SÚA PMV, 1925-1930 X/M/12/1 225-508-1, kart 508, sv 1.
70. RP, 11 and 12.12.1928.
71. Král, *Rudé odbory*, p. 210.
72. DK, vol 32, no 51, 22.12.1928.
73. PL, 5.12.1928.
74. PL, 13.12.1928.
75. ČS, 8.12.1928.

76. DK, vol 33, no 1, 5.1.1929. Both Halík and Nádvorník signed the resolution.

77. Jarmila Menclová, "Před rozkolem v Mezinárodním všeodborovém svazu," in PkDKSČ, vol 5, no 4, 1965, p. 566.

78. DK, vol 33, no 3, 19.1.1929.

79. RP, 25.12.1928.

80. RP, 5.10.1928.

81. KR, vol 6, no 1, January, 1929.

82. Král, *Rudé odbory*, pp. 219-21.

83. RP, 27.1.1929; DK, vol 33, no 8, 23.2.1929.

84. See for instance Menclová, "Před rozkolem," p. 566 and Ján Mlynárik, "Nová štrajková stratégia a taktika a štrajk severočeských textilákov roku 1929," in ČSČH, vol 14, no 5, 1966, p. 711.

85. For more details on the political and economic background and the demands and negotiations see, Mlynárik, "Nová štrajková stratégia," pp. 708-14.

86. DK, vol 33, nos 1 and 3, 5 and 19.1.1929 and no 5, 2.2.1929; RP, 27.1.1929.

87. Sýkora claimed that the KSČ had appointed the strike leadership from above. See DK, vol 33, no 10, 9.3.1929.

88. Melvin Mabey, *The Origin and Development of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia*, D. Phil, Oxford, 1955, p. 237.

89. *Protokol V sjezdu KSČ*, p. 85.

90. Reiman et al., *Dějiny KSČ*, p. 257.

91. Josef Hais asserted that Zápotocký was privately opposed to the strike, but in public followed the Politburo decision. See, VOA fond Rudé odbory, kart 12, inv jedn 550, *Protokoly schůzí představenstva MVS*, 1929, 19.3.1929; see also, RO, vol 7, no 8-10, August, 1929; Zápotocký confirmed the necessity of the strike in RP, 23.2.1929.

92. RO, vol 7, no 5-7, 1.5.1929.

93. Mlynárik, "Nová štrajková stratégia," pp. 726-7.

94. It is impossible to calculate with any certainty the number of strikers. A figure of 10,000 was given by RP, 10.2.1929 and later by Reiman et al., *Dějiny KSČ*, p. 257; 8,000 by RP, 14.2.1929, DK, vol 33, no 10, 9.3.1929 and RO, vol 7, no 4, 26.2.1929 and no 8-10, August,

1929; 7,000 by J. Hais in VOA fond Rudé odbory, *Protokoly schůzí představenstva MVS*, 1929, 19.3.1929; 5,000 by Mlynárik, "Nová štrajková stratégia," p. 722; 4,800 by PL, 12.2.1929; 4,500 by Mabey, *The Origin and Development*, p. 237; and finally, 3,050 by PL, 9.2.1929.

95. RO, vol 7, no 8-10, August, 1929.

96. For details see, Mlynárik, "Nová štrajková stratégia," pp. 714-24.

97. *Inprecorr*, vol 9, no 57, 9.10.1929, pp. 1226-7.

98. PL, 4.1. and 8.2.1929.

99. PL, 14.2.1929.

100. RP, 1.3.1929.

101. DK, vol 33, no 9, 2.3.1929.

102. RP, 19.2.1929.

103. RP, 21.2.1929.

104. RP, 7.3.1929.

105. DK, vol 33, no 10, 9.3.1929.

106. RP, 5.3.1929.

107. For instance, see Slánský's attack on Sýkora in *Protokol V sjezdu KSČ*, pp. 84-6.

108. RP, 8.3.1929.

109. See "Přehled o složení nejvyšších orgánů KSČ v letech 1920-1945," in *PkDKSČ*, vol 5, no 5, 1965, pp. 770 and 773-4; also Jacques Rupnik, *L'Histoire du mouvement communiste tchécoslovaque: Des origines à la prise du pouvoir, 1918-1948*, Ph.D., Sorbonne, Paris, 1977, Appendix.

110. RP, 26.2.1929; *Inprecorr*, vol 9, no 5, 25.1.1929; p. 85; *The World Situation and Economic Struggle: Theses of the Tenth Plenum E.C.C.I.*, London, n.d., pp. 16-17.

111. Menclová, "Před rozkolem," p. 568.

112. *Protokol V sjezd KSČ*, pp. 87 and 93-4.

113. CI, vol 6, no 17, July, 1929, pp. 652 and 671.

114. Král, *Rudé odbory*, p. 228.

115. Hájek was replaced by Arno Hais.

116. VOA fond Rudé odbory, *Protokoly schůzí představenstva MVS*, 1929, 10.3.1929. (My emphasis).

117. DK, vol 33, special edition, 12.3.1929.

118. RO, vol 7, no 5-7, 1.5.1929.

119. *Zpráva lučebníků MVS 1925-1928*, p. 7.
120. RP, 12., 13. and 14.3.1929.
121. SÚA PMV, 1925-1930 X/M/12/1 225-508-2, kart 508, sv. 2.
122. VOA fond Rudé odbory, *Protokoly schůzí představenstva MVS*, 1929, 19.3.1929.
123. Král, *Rudé odbory*, pp. 234-5.
124. RP, 20.3.1929.
125. RP, 14.3.1929.
126. For more details on the Dresden meeting see, RP, 30.3.1929; RO, vol 7 no 5-7, 1.5.1929; Menclová, "Před rozkolem," pp. 569-71; Mabey, *The Origin and Development*, pp. 240-1.
127. *Inprecorr*, vol 9, no 18, 12.4.1929, p. 374.
128. *Náčrt dejin československého odborového hnutí*, Bratislava, 1963, pp. 203-4; Mabey, *The Origin and Development*, p. 242.
129. RO, vol 7, no 5-7, 1.5.1929.
130. *Inprecorr*, vol 9, no 28, 14.6.1929, p. 618.
131. NZ, vol 35, no 15, 10.4.1929.
132. RP, 15.3.1929; VOA fond Rudé odbory, *Nové cesty Rudých odborů*, p. 6.
133. RP, 12.3.1929.
134. VOA fond Rudé odbory, *Protokoly schůzí představenstva MVS*, 1929, report of 8.10.1929; the Profintern claimed that ten members supported Hais and fifteen the R.I.L.U. See, RP, 17.3.1929.
135. Reiman et al., *Dějiny KSČ*, pp. 265-6; Hájek, "40 let od vzniku," p. 924; Hájek, "Puč likvidátorů," p. 316 and Menclová, "Před rozkolem," p. 568.
136. Jacques Rupnik, *Histoire du Parti communiste tchécoslovaque*, p. 87.
137. RP, 27.3.1929.
138. ZSÚS, vol 18, Prague, 1937, p. 1015.
- 1015.
139. Jitka Klementová, *Československé odborové hnutí v datech a faktech*, Prague, 1980, p. 80.
140. For Nádvorník's speech to the congress see, *IX sjezd Odborového sdružení československého. Zápis o jeho zasedání ve dnech 21-24 září 1930 v Obecním domě v Praze*, Prague, 1930, pp. 39-40.

141. However, Hais is said to have respected Zápotocký. See Hájek, *Za námi cesta neschůdná*, p. 103. The situation was further complicated by the fact that Hájek was Hais's son-in-law.

142. For the line adopted by many Czech and Slovak historians, see Václav Král, "Rudé odbory a ROI," in *Bojový odkaz Rudých odborů*, Prague, 1972, pp. 29-31; Lubomír Vejnar, *Revoluční nástup Rudých odborů, 1929-1930*, Prague, 1962, pp. 48-51; *Prehled dějin KSČ*, Prague, 1978, pp. 136-8; *Prehled dějin československého odborového hnutí*, Prague, 1984, pp. 196-203.

143. VOA fond Rudé odbory, *Nové cesty Rudých odborů*, pp. 3, 6 and 11; see also, RP, 24.3.1929.

144. RO, vol 7, no 5-7, 1.5.1929.

145. RO, vol 7, no 5-7, 1.5.1929.

146. RO, vol 7, no 8-10, August, 1929.

147. *Zpráva MVS k III sjezdu*, pp. 1-2.

148. RO, vol 7, no 8-10, August, 1929. (My emphasis).

Chapter Nine

1. For details on the labour movement in Britain see, Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, vol 3; E.H. Carr, *Foundations of a Planned Economy, 1926-1929*, vol 3, part 2, London, 1976; Daniel Calhoun, *The United Front: The TUC and the Russians, 1923-1928*, Cambridge, 1976; Roderick Martin, *Communism and The British Trade Unions, 1924-1933*, Oxford, 1969; L.J. MacFarlane, *The British Communist Party. Its Origin and Development until 1929*, London, 1966; James Klugmann, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Volume One: Formation and Early Years, 1919-1924*, London, 1968.

2. Calhoun, *The United Front*, pp. 29 and 63-6.

3. On the communist movement in Germany see, Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, vol 3; Carr, *Foundations of a Planned Economy*, vol 3; part 2; Ben Fowkes, *Communism in Germany under the Weimar Republic*, London, 1984; Ruth Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism*, Cambridge, Mass., 1948; John A. Moses, *Trade Unionism in Germany from Bismarck to Hitler, 1869-1933*, 2 vols, London, 1982.

4. One independent Czech historian has argued that the leftist trend of opposition prevailed in the KPD and the rightist in the KSČ.

See, Miloš Hájek, "The Communist Parties in the Nineteen-Twenties: Germany and Czechoslovakia," in *Independent Historiography in Czechoslovakia*, vol 2, Berlin, 1985, pp. 49-89.

5. The best introduction to the early years of the French communist movement is to be found in Robert Wohl, *French Communism in the Making, 1914-1924*, Stanford, 1966; see also Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, vol 3; Carr, *Foundations of a Planned Economy*, vol 3, part 2; Annie Kriegel, *The French Communists. Profile of a People*, Chicago, 1972; Marjorie Clark, *A History of the French Labor Movement, 1910-1928*, Berkeley, 1930; David J. Saposs, *The Labor Movement in Post-War France*, New York, 1931; Val Lorwin, *The French Labor Movement*, Cambridge, Mass., 1966; Edward Mortimer, *The Rise of the French Communist Party, 1920-1947*, London, 1984; some very interesting inside details are provided in Jules Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline. Dix ans au service de l'Internationale communiste, 1921-1931*, Neuchâtel, 1971.

6. Wohl, *French Communism*, pp. 406-7.

7. Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, vol 3, p. 594.

8. Carr, *Foundations of a Planned Economy*, vol 3, part 2, pp. 485-6.

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Všeodborový archiv ROH (All-Trade Union Archive)

The archive is the main depository of material on the Czech trade union movement, holding sources dating from 1821 up to the 1960s. The most relevant *fonds* for the modern historian are those of the Social Democratic trade union, the OSČ 1879-1939, the Red Unions 1922-1938, the National Socialist trade union, the ČOD 1902-1939, and the National Democratic union, the NSOO 1921-1939. The OSČ *fond* includes type-written minutes of the meetings of many leading union bodies and a useful collection of regional reports. The archive also houses several *fonds* of individual unions, the most extensive being the miners and metalworkers. Moreover, the archive and its affiliated library, which boasts 95,000 volumes, holds not only a large stock of union journals and newspapers dating from the pre-1914 period, but also a wide collection of reports and proceedings of union congresses and party statements and resolutions on trade union affairs.

Fonds consulted:

(i) OSČ

6260/438 Zápisy o schůzích a poradách tajemníků OSČ (Minutes of the meetings of OSČ secretaries), 1920-1923.

6255/437 Zápisy o plenárních schůzích OSČ (Minutes of plenary meetings of the OSČ), 1919.

6257/438 Zápisy o schůzích zastupitelstva OSČ (Minutes of the meetings of the OSČ board of representatives), 1920-1923 and 1925-1928.

6325/441 Zprávy ústředního sekretariátu OSČ (Reports of the OSČ central secretariat), 1921 and 1925-1928.

6266/439A Schůze odborové rady Velké Prahy od 16 září 1921 do 26 října 1934 (Meetings of the trade union council of Greater Prague from 16th September 1921 to 26th October 1934).

Regional Reports:

Zprávy krajských odborových rad a krajských sekretariátů OSČ (Reports of regional trade union councils and regional secretariats of the OSČ)

6329/442 Chrudim 1922-1923 and 1925-1930.

6330/442 Brno 1927-1929.

6331/442 Pardubice 1922-1927 and 1929.

6335/442 České Budějovice 1929-1930.

6338/442 Plzeň 1920 and 1925-1929.

6346/443 Moravská Ostrava 1925-1926.

6347/443 Liberec 1928-1929.

(ii) Horníci

3624/273 Zápisy o schůzích představenstva Svazu horníků, 25 srpna 1918-26 ledna 1928 (Minutes of the meetings of the executive council of the Union of Miners, 25th August, 1918 to 26th January 1928).

(iii) Kovodělníci

4390/318 Zápisník schůzí představenstva Svazu kovodělníků v Praze, 7 února 1923-30 května 1925 (Minute book of the meetings of the

executive council of the Union of Metalworkers in Prague, 7th February 1923 to 30th May 1925).

4391/318 Protokol schůzí představenstva Svazu kovodělníků, 1 června 1925-? (Record of the meetings of the executive council of the Union of Metalworkers, 1st June 1925 to ?)

(iv) Stavebníci

8065/548 Zápisy o schůzích svazového představenstva, 17 září 1924-12 června 1928 (Minutes of the meetings of the union executive council, 17th September 1924 to 12th June 1928).

(v) Rudé odbory

The Red Union *fond* is appreciably less well-stocked than the OSČ, especially as far as the 1920s are concerned. There are, however, several useful MVS reports and official statements, and Profintern resolutions. Unfortunately, minutes of MVS executive meetings do not exist before 1929.

kart 1, inv jedn 1 These Komunistické internacionály o Rudé internacionáe odborových svazů (Thesis of the Communist International on the Red International of Labour Unions).

kart i, inv jedn 7 Rezoluce III sjezdu Rudé odborové internacionály (Resolution of the 3rd congress of the R.I.L.U.).

kart 1, inv jedn 12 Rezoluce Exekutivy ROI (Resolutions of the R.I.L.U. Executive).

kart 1, inv jedn 14 Usnesení IV sjezdu ROI a poměry v MVS (Decisions of the 4th R.I.L.U. congress and conditions in the MVS).

kart 9, inv jedn 390 Rezoluce o činnosti a taktice komunistů v odborovém hnutí (Resolution on the activity and tactics of communists in the trade union movement).

kart 11, inv jedn 533 Třídní boj aneb třídní dorozumění? (Class struggle or class understanding?).

kart 12, inv jedn 538 Nové cesty Rudých odborů. Usnesení a rezoluce III řádného sjezdu MVS (The New Way of the Red Unions. Decisions and resolutions of the 3rd ordinary congress of the MVS).

kart 12, inv jedn 550 Protokoly schůzí představenstva MVS, 1929 (Record of the meetings of the MVS executive, 1929).

(vi) Čestný soud, ÚRO 1945-1946

kart 2, inv jedn 11 Arno Hais.

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- (i) Presidium ministerstva vnitra (PMV), 1919-1924 and 1925-1930.
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Reports of the District Administration in Kladno on the activities of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and on strike actions in the region.

(iii) Okresní úřad Slaný, 1924-1926.

Reports of the District Administration in Slaný on the activities of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

Archive of the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

The library of the IISH provided me with several useful primary sources that were not readily available in Czechoslovakia.

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Komunista (The Communist)

Komunistická revue (The Communist Review)

- Kovodělník (The Metalworker)
 Na zdar (For Success). Also a miners' greeting.
 Nová mysl (New Mind)
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